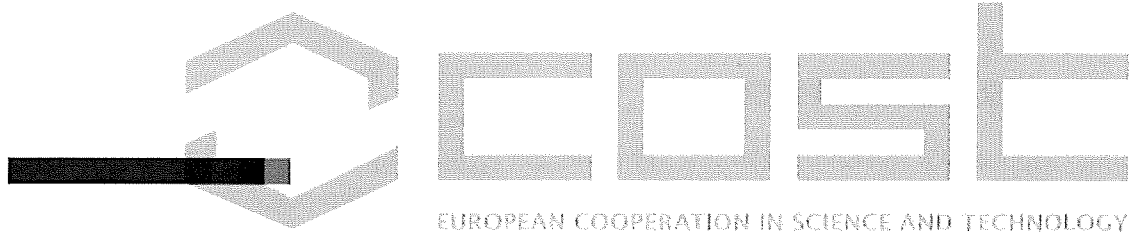


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# SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION

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**COST STSM Reference Number:** COST-STSM-IS1410-35576

**Period:** 2017-03-06 to 2017-03-10

**COST Action:** IS1410

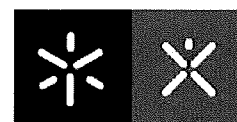
**STSM type:** Regular (from Portugal to United Kingdom)

**STSM Applicant:** Dr. Marco Bento, University of Minho, Braga (PT), [macbento@hotmail.com](mailto:macbento@hotmail.com)

**STSM Topic:** Enhancing the use of tablets with children and teachers

**Host:** Diana Bannister, University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton (UK),  
[dianabannister@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:dianabannister@wlv.ac.uk)

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University of Minho  
Institute of Education

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# *Final Report*

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## **1. PURPOSE OF THE STSM**

When I applied for this Short Scientific Term Mission (STSM), my first idea was to know closely the work of Diana Bannister, whom I had met a year ago at a conference. I was very interested in her work and in her research because it converged with my own research interests as soon as I began my process of defining my research problem. After a few preliminary contacts with Diana Bannister, in which I expressed my interest in getting to know the University of Wolverhampton and her work, she soon made herself available with all the kindness and availability to receive me. Therefore, we started the procedures so that this research visit could take place and we defined the following objectives for it:

1. To meet the LTU (University of Wolverhampton – Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing) and get acknowledged with the research projects developed therein;
2. To visit a school where an intervention of a digital reading teaching project is being implemented;
3. To present and discuss my project;
4. To know about the Future Classrooms Lab and CO-LAB projects, specifically with regard to teacher training with the use of tablets in schools;
5. To understand the teacher training model that is developed by Diana Bannister and her team and confront it with the model that I intend to develop;
6. To present some projects carried out in Portugal;
7. To promote a roundtable discussion on how to incorporate teachers in this new educational paradigm - the English and Portuguese experiences;
8. To discuss with the research team: a. The concept of reading as redefined in the context of use of tablets; b. The introduction of tablets in the teaching of reading comprehension; c. How to teach reading in the digital environment d. The efficiency of the digital reading; e. The educational challenges faced by teachers in the new digital contexts of reading.
9. To promote the sharing of experiences on the issues discussed.
10. To produce a digital document with my conclusions and share it online.

The main purpose of the STSM was to exchange knowledge with Diana Bannister and know more about her research in the areas of Education, Pedagogy and Technologies, focused on the discussion of the school of the future or teaching of the future. It also aimed to get the highest benefit out of this excellent opportunity by establishing contacts and talking with people with different views, sharing ideas and experiences, and knowing interesting innovative

projects and initiatives, aiming to provide a response to the needs of the children in the 21st century, since my research focuses on the use of mobile devices in the development of reading comprehension skills.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSM

With my research project I aim to investigate the role of mobile devices in the development of reading comprehension skills in primary education. To carry out this research I will use a development research methodology, because it provides practical input and at the same time, scientific contributions with the aim of finding solutions for our educational concerns in teaching reading. Through flipped learning and gamification pedagogies I am building a new model in the teaching and learning of reading, in different teacher training modules. I am also including mobile devices in an educational context to improve the learning of reading comprehension skills. With this investigative process I intend to contribute to an effective improvement of learning outcomes in the Portuguese language, in particular regarding reading comprehension.

In accordance with the objectives proposed for this STSM, Diana Bannister and I designed a set of activities for the work week, which I now describe in detail.

In the first day (6<sup>th</sup> March) we had the first meeting at Walsall Campus, WN Building University of Wolverhampton. In this first moment we had the opportunity to redesign some of the activities planned for the work week, with the possibility of introducing others, such as carrying out a recorded interview with Diana Bannister. On the same day, I was able to present my research project in detail, discuss some of the points of view on research and reflect on some of the methodological options taken.

It was equally interesting to discuss the research with Andy Cramp (Head of Doctoral Studies), who launched me some interesting questions to research and points develop in the state of the art of my research project.

Later I visited the different learning spaces of the University of Wolverhampton, Walsall campus, namely, classrooms, auditoriums, library, among others, but above all an embryonic space of pedagogical innovations, the room Active Learning Centre, which provides some new technologies to support the transformation of pedagogy.

In the second day, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March, we visited Rushall Primary School (<http://www.rushall.walsall.sch.uk/>) to observe a reading comprehension class of students aged 8-9 years.

The observation was very interesting, considering the teacher's use of mobile technologies, the students' digital skills and the way the students worked them. However, it was also very interesting to perceive the balance that was made between the technological use and the pedagogical objectives in learning. This is a school with a lot of resources at the service of teachers and students.

After observing the session, we talked to the class teacher, Mr. Kelvin Stephens, and the school principal Mrs. Kate Bargh. This visit has brought me an opportunity to know different

strategies in the approach to reading comprehension and the use of mobile devices, so as to be able to compare them with the observations I have made and go on making in Portuguese schools for my own research.

After the observation, Diana Bannister and I had an important reflection about the process of observation of classes, a topic in which she has much experience on and that will be central in my own research methodology. She helped me understand what type of observation of classes we should have and why or not to intervene with students and teachers. It was a very intense and decisive reflection process in my learning process.

On this day, I also attended a conference on Maximizing the Impact of Teaching Assistants | MITA in the auditorium of the University of Wolverhampton.

I had the opportunity to present my research to the Master's Degree in Education, being able to present the project in general, but also the dilemmas and difficulties that came up when I started the investigation and tried to solve concrete problems. We also had the opportunity to discuss the importance of asking a good question investigation. I also attended Diana Bannister's class on evaluation, which focused on why and how to evaluate in education.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March, the third day of my STSM, I visited another primary school, in this case the Halesowen Church of England Primary School (<https://halesowen.sch.life/>), and observed a reading comprehension class of 9-year-old students. In this school I found a different context from the first one, considering the social problems that the school faced. This circumstance has an impact on the type of activities that the class teacher programs. Nevertheless, when I observed the pedagogical dynamics of the classroom teacher, it was possible to perceive the great concern that she had in the dynamization of the content and the promotion of varied activities of reading and writing, although with less use of technological resources. As in the first school observed, after the observation, I also had the chance to talk with the class teacher about the activities carried out, specifically about her pedagogical options, which seemed interesting to me. These were also a contribution to my learning in this STSM due to the observation of a reality that is different from the Portuguese one.

Diana Bannister and I then held a new conversation on the observation of this day, reflecting on the pros and cons of the activities and methodological options taken by the class teacher. I also conducted a structured interview with a script, recorded in audio, with Diana Bannister:

- i. What is your role in the University of Wolverhampton and what are your interest areas of research?
- ii. About the Future Classroom Lab Project. How did it happen? When and how it was created? And what was the main idea of the project?
- iii. What were the theoretical tenets behind the creation of the future classroom labs?
- iv. When you thought about this classroom labs, what kind of new role did you think that could be played by teachers and also by students?
- v. What are the pedagogical scenarios that you think that a 21 century teacher should use in her classes?
- vi. What does "leading a change pedagogy" mean to you?
- vii. Why did you think of the six learning zones? What is the goal of that?
- viii. In Portugal, as in Europe, there are many learning spaces. How can a school validate that space as a right one?

- ix. How could we know if the pedagogy is changing in that kind of classroom? Should we have a guideline or a recipe for teachers to use the learning zones / spaces well? I am talking about from a pedagogical point of view and about changing practices.
- x. Don't you think that, when a school has a future classroom lab, that could be their ICT showroom instead of a Place of change of the teaching profession?
- xi. Could teachers be assigning a great role to the technology, but leaving in a superficial way the deepening of learning?
- xii. In your opinion, what kind of training sessions should the future teachers and teachers in service have?
- xiii. I saw some of this in your class of yesterday, but tell me what kind of evaluation should the students have in a new pedagogy environment?
- xiv. How do you imagine the education in 2050?
- xv. Just to finish, do you think that more than FCL - Future Classrooms Labs - we should have FIT - Future Innovative Teachers?

Later that day, I had the opportunity to visit the Birmingham library, which presents a set of quite different reading from most of the Portuguese libraries.

In the fourth day (Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March) Diana Bannister and I had a meeting at Wolverhampton Science Park with David Whyley (Consultant on Technologies in Learning and Teaching), during which we talked about various issues related to mobile learning in education. Arising from this conversation some questions came up that I should ponder and reflect upon in my research, but also the identification of some examples of educational projects using mobile technologies in learning and how they are used by both students and teachers. Moreover, with this conversation we were able to reflect on the widespread is 1: 1 device ownership for learning and whether mobile devices are more commonly owned by school or by learners under purchase schemes as well as on the effects of the proliferation of tablets and on pedagogical aspects support the use of these technologies.

This day was very important for my bibliographical knowledge, but also for new intervention ideas, considering the pedagogical projects presented.

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March, the fifth day of the STSM, we had a meeting with John Owen, Senior Lecturer in Computer Science and former local authority adviser for technology. I had the opportunity to present my research project to him and also to listen to his opinions on it. Furthermore, during this conversation it was possible to discuss the different points of view about the design of teacher training, both the initial teacher training at universities and in the ongoing training of teachers who are in service and who are very difficult to convince about the change of pedagogical practices. We also discussed the potentialities and difficulties of the approaches to gamification in teacher training, including the use of online platforms.

During the final conversation I had with Diana Bannister, we planned an online the production of an online document, finished a bibliography review and commented on my work. Diana Bannister kindly handed me over some classroom observation grids with the use of mobile devices designed by herself, including late adaptations made to them by herself so that I can use them in my own research. Some challenges have been proposed for my research, which I will try to answer because of the enormous development that this STSM has meant in my investigative process.

### 3. FUTURE COLLABORATION WITH THE HOST INSTITUTION

These contacts bring me several opportunities for future collaboration, allowing strengthening network relations with researchers at the University of Wolverhampton, the Rushall and Halesowen Church of England Primary Schools.

I defined with Diana Bannister the possibility of collaboration in future projects about new learning innovative scenarios and new learning spaces, but also the writing of papers about this issue. I have also invited Diana Bannister to participate as keynote speaker in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting about Pedagogical Innovation SUPERTABi, in 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> September 2017, occurring in Portugal.

### 4. FORESEEN PUBLICATIONS/ARTICLES RESULTING FROM THE STSM

After this STSM we decided to write an article together to present the 2017 Learn INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM event to Innovative Learning Environments, to be held on September 7, 2017 in London. The title of the abstract is: Mobile Learning and New Classroom Spaces: What have we learned? And has already been submitted for evaluation to *Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Change* (<http://www.iletc.com.au>)

### 5. OTHER COMMENTS

I am very grateful to COST Action IS1410 for the opportunity to collaborate closely in the European space and to all teachers and researchers who received me readily and shared their projects and ideas in the UK.

I am profoundly grateful to my host, Diana Bannister, for her hospitality, attention and encouragement.

### 6. REFLEXION

This visit was of great utility and interest to me above. First of all because of the personal experience of knowing realities so different from the one I normally experience. Then, because of the professional experience it meant for me, a young researcher who seeks to perceive other educational models of education. In fact, it seemed it me that the English educational system is designed in a way that depends a lot on a good performance of teachers from the pedagogical point of view and on the design of the activities to be provided to their students.

This is not so in the Portuguese educational system, which follows a yet rigid curriculum that often does not allow this same flexibility in learning.

Meeting Diana Bannister personally and the other researchers working at the University of Wolverhampton was excellent due to their professionalism, patience and sympathy throughout the week, but also for sharing knowledge and wisdom about the new innovative pedagogies supported by technologies, teacher training, research methodologies, among others. Learning from those who have experience and knowledge has helped me better think the present and the future of my investigation.

Through this Visiting Research, I expected and actually got to know better how to use mobile devices in education in order to improve the reading-comprehension skills and motivation of primary-school students. But above all I was challenged to reflect on the investigative path I have made up to this moment. I believe this visit is a turning point which will bring much more consistency to my research.

## 7. CONFIRMATION BY THE HOST INSTITUTION OF THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF THE STSM

I confirm that Marco Bento from the Institute of Education of University of Minho visited our University and held diverse meetings with leading experts at the University of Wolverhampton and two Primaries Schools from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

The visit was successful and took place as reported above.



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(Diana Bannister)

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