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## **Report of a Site Visit to the Centro de Investigação “Didática e Tecnologia na Formação de Formadores”, Research Centre “Didactics and Technology in the Education of Trainers” at the Universidade de Aveiro**

**Dates of Visit:** March 23 and 24 2015

**Member of the Scientific Committee:** D. Jean Clandinin, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta

In March 2015 I was invited to conduct a site visit to the CIDTFF to gather information on, and to present findings to the faculty based on the information and to discuss ideas and possibilities for the Center’s evaluation and future steps. Professor Anna Maria de Carvalho was also part of the site visit and the comments reflect our joint presentation. The following represents a brief account of the events leading up to the visit, the visit and our findings.

### 1. History of the work with the University of Aveiro

In 2013 Professor Nilza Costa, the then Director of the Research Centre for Didactics and Technology in Teacher Education\_ CIDTFF (since April 2012) invited me to serve as an international researcher on a proposal the CIDTFF was preparing for the FCT. I agreed to serve as an international member of the committee.

2. In the late fall of 2014 I learned that the proposal of the CIDTFF did not proceed to the second phase of evaluation. As a consequence funding was sharply reduced as of 2015. As a consequence of the need to find additional funding I was invited to spend two days at the CIDTFF in March 2015. The first day of the visit was to reflect on the reasons for the failure to proceed to the second phase of the evaluation and the second day was planned to be a day of visits and discussion with the members of CIDTFF where new project ideas would be discussed. At that time I received the proposal submitted to the FCT in December 2013 and the final results of the stage 1 evaluation.

3. I was able to arrange travel as I was presenting a keynote address at a conference in Ireland and went onward to Portugal for the visit on March 23 and 24 with arrival on the evening of March 22.

4. In early March, I received the program for the visit with the purpose as to become familiar with the Research Centre, its organization, management and how it works, as well as the challenges and difficulties that we are facing, the initiatives that we are carrying out and the current perspectives. The program (see attached programme) for Professor Anna Maria Pessoa de Carvalho (University of São Paulo, Brazil) and I.
5. Day One of the site visit: March 23 2015 began with an opening presentation about the CIDTFF that included the members of the coordinating and permanent scientific committees, coordinators of the research labs, and selected members with nuclear CVs. In the afternoon we visited the research labs of the CIDTFF (Science Education Lab and Science Garden, Education Math Lab, Digital Contents Lab, Open Lab for Foreign Languages Learning, Laboratory for Research on Portuguese Language Education, and Policies and Educational Administration Lab). In each lab we were given access to the facility and had an opportunity to learn from key members of each lab about the research and projects that were underway.

Day Two: March 24 2015 included a morning meeting with the External Advisory Committee meeting with Professor Anna Maria de Carvalho and I. We prepared a power point to outline our findings for the afternoon debate on CIDTFF's strategic programme with the Coordinating and Permanent Scientific Committees, with selected members with nuclear CVs and invited members. After our presentation there was a final reflection and discussion.

6. The site visit was well planned and organized.
7. Working from our power point (see attached) we highlighted the following points of our review. In our presentation at the conclusion of our site visit and our deliberations, we discerned that there was a great need for what we called a forward-looking story for the CIDTFF. We saw many researchers who were very engaged in challenging, demanding and relevant research projects. The researchers we met were extremely hard working and committed to producing excellent research findings that had relevance for teaching and learning and for teacher education. We expressed concern about a declining number of faculty and that there had been no new people hired into research positions. With heavier demands for teaching and working with

students, there was less time for research and researchers were struggling to keep their research projects going under such conditions. We also noted a serious concern that there were no teacher education researchers as reviewers on the panel of the 2015-2020 call for proposals. At the time I was co-editor of *Teaching and Teacher Education*, the top ranked international journal in research in teacher education and I was unable to identify active teacher education reviewers on the panel. It would be difficult to be judged well without knowledgeable “in the area of expertise” researchers.

We raised a number of points for discussion that we posed for the audience of the plenary session. We noted that it was somewhat difficult to articulate between research projects, research groups, labs, and research strands. We suggested that clearer definition and more time working collaboratively across groups, labs, and strands would be helpful.

We suggested a stronger operationalization of the thematic strands, which seemed not to have been formulated well to allow structural and research activities.

We suggested the need to operationalize the criteria for membership in CIDTFF. We pointed out the need to specify criteria for participants in the CIDTFF as well as the terms of membership.

We pointed out the need to work with reviewers’ criteria for what counts as international (not textbooks, not proceedings, and not the in-house journal). The review criteria needed to be the ones that shaped the publication of research findings. We did encourage researchers to see their teaching and didactic resources as part of research dissemination and to ensure they included that as part of their knowledge transfer activities.

We also pointed out the need to identify and state areas of research excellence according criteria to be defined. Matching research areas of excellence to the criteria that were set by funding agencies was crucial.

We also pointed out the importance of better representation between activities of research groups and projects. There were areas that may be missed because of the lack of representation between the groups and projects.

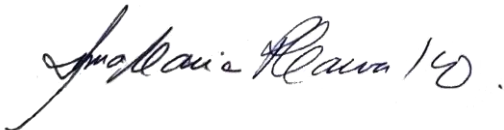
There was a lively discussion and we were asked for further clarification and elaboration on our recommendations. The report was received positively.

Prepared by: D. Jean Clandinin

March, 2015



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