

## SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION

### BRIEF

Action number: ECOST-STSM-Request-CA17132-47109

STSM start and end date: 2020-07-15 - 2020-07-29

Grantee name: Colin Guthrie King

Home institution: Universität Basel, Basel, Switzerland

Host Institution: University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

### Research interest:

The grantee and Dr. Wagemans (my co-author at the host institution) are collaborating on a new approach to critical thinking, to be published as a monograph by MIT Press. The purpose of this scientific mission was to work out a first outline for the book and discuss the theoretical framework it should invoke for studying argumentation in public, non-expert for a: a context which the authors have dubbed “argumentation in the wild” (and which is the title of their forthcoming book).

### STSM Summary:

The product of our collaboration in Amsterdam was the development of such a framework, the main components of which will be summarized in the following. We worked for 3 hours per day during my stay in Amsterdam and produced a detailed 6-page outline of our book, the contents of which I shall summarize in the following.

**1. Teaching students how to encounter “wild” argumentation.** In a classroom setting, students are prepared to be critical of various types of argumentation presented to them. Outside the classroom, we all may fall prey to a variety of misleading forms of communication which we sometimes we not even identify as argumentation. Our textbook confronts this circumstance by providing the student, first, with a typology of arguments designed to recognize arguments in various informal (“wild”) contexts, analyze their characteristics, and identify their type. The approach is built on a pragmatic and speech-act

theoretical framework for the analysis of persuasive discourse. It culminates in a series of guidelines for the assessment of argumentation which is based on our typology.

**2. Implementing the framework.** These broad objectives require a plan for didactic implementation, as they draw upon a wide array of existing scholarship in argumentation theory, logic, pragmatics and semantics. The plan for implementation which we developed during my stay in Amsterdam features the following steps (in order): 1. An analysis of discourse genres and variables; 2. A presentation of linguistic rules and conventions as they relate to argumentation; 3. A chapter on recognizing the “elements” of argumentation; 4. A chapter on argument typology; 5. A general approach to the evaluation of the arguments, by type; and finally 6. A chapter on behavioural norms in argumentation and their evaluation.

**3. Identification of further steps for this research.** In addition to developing this framework, the grantee and Dr. Wagemans set out a work-plan for the completion of their joint monograph by the due date of manuscript submission at the end of 2021.