

Annual General Meeting of Members

International Conference Centre, Birmingham, 4 November 2017

Chair’s Report for 2016-2017

**1. Preamble**

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of TACTYC’s activities during the year from November 2016 to October 2017. As in previous years, the elected and co-opted members of the Executive Committee have made decisions on behalf of members, which are summarised in this and the other reports submitted for the AGM. Members will see a wide range of activities that have been undertaken this year, the costs of which are set out in the Treasurer’s statement. As detailed below, the review of governance that began just over a year ago (as reported at the last AGM) has reached its conclusion with a recommendation to change the organisation’s status. Much work has already gone into introducing measures to update the financial system.

During the course of the year, the Executive Committee sought the advice of specialist consultants from Counterculture who reviewed TACTYC’s governance structures and processes and made recommendations for improvements.

Meanwhile, many of TACTYC’s regular activities have been sustained. Four issues of *Early Years International Journal of Research and Development* were published and royalties from the sale more than covered the costs of a small honorarium, which is paid annually to the Editors. The journal continues to go from strength to strength thanks in no small part to expertise and hard work of the Editors and colleagues at Taylor and Francis publishing. In all other respects, the work of the Executive Committee continues on a voluntary basis and I would like to extend my gratitude to these colleagues for their on-going commitment to the organisation.

**2. TACTYC’s Executive Committee**

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| ***Elected Members*** |  |
| Helen Bilton | (2016-2019) |
| Jackie Eyles | Treasurer & Membership Secretary to June 2017 (2015-2018) |
| Rory McDowall Clark | Book Reviews and Website Support (2015-2018) |
| Janet Moyles | Web Editor, Book Series Editor, Acting Treasurer from June 2017 (2015-2018) |
| Jane Murray | Conference Coordinator (2014-2017) |
| Jane Payler | Book Series Editor (2014-2017) |
| Sacha Powell | Chair (2015-2018) |
| Anita Soni | Secretary (2014-2017) |
| Nancy Stewart | Vice Chair & Membership Secretary from June 2017 (2015-2018) |
| ***Ex Officio Members*** |  |
| Janet Georgeson | Journal Editor |
| Pamela Oberhuemer | Journal Editor |
| Rod Parker-Rees | Journal Editor |
| Wendy Scott | President (2010-2018) |

The Executive Committee has been augmented by the valuable contributions of six co-opted members in 2016-2017. Profiles of all members of the Executive can be found on the TACTYC website.

**2a. Executive Committee Changes**

*Elected members*: This year, three places on the Executive Committee came up for election and three nominations were received by the deadline so the following are duly elected:

* Sharon Curtis
* Jane Payler
* Jane Murray

I am also extremely grateful to Executive Committee Members (elected and co-opted) whose terms of office are due to end this year.

*Changes and thanks:* Particular thanks go to Maulfry Worthington who has indicated her intention to retire from Executive Committee duties. For many years, Maulfry has been a dedicated and valued contributor to the Exec and members will know her well from her excellent newsletters over the last 9 years. We will miss her but are delighted that she will continue to be a member of TACTYC!

Members may be less familiar with the contribution made by Anita Soni (Elected 2014-2017) but it has been no less significant. Anita has been responsible for minuting meetings and organising the elections and has always done so with inimitable good humour and expert precision.

Thanks are also due for the contributions of our co-opted members: Nicola Amies, Gareth Betts-Davies, Rosa Collins and Gina Houston. Co-options for 2016-17 will be decided by the Executive Committee following the AGM based on identified and necessary expertise.

Last but by no means least; I would like to make a special mention of sincere thanks to Jackie Eyles who for many years has single-handedly managed TACTYC’s financial and membership information. This is no small job and Jackie has always given a personal touch that many members will have appreciated!

Please note that membership enquiries should now be directed to Nancy Stewart and Treasury enquiries to Janet Moyles.

*Committee meetings:* Over the last twelve months, the full Executive Committee met on four occasions.

*Additional meetings:* The journal editors held their annual meeting in London in February 2017 and a Governance Sub-Group (see below), appointed by the Executive Committee, met twice in 2017. The conference coordination team, led by Jane Murray also visited the ICC to negotiate the terms of this year’s conference and AGM while members of the Executive have represented TACTYC at various external groups including ECF, PUG and More Than A Score (see below).

Our updated financial systems will enable future reporting on the costs of running Executive Committee meetings and activities on behalf of members to be more transparent and disaggregated. This will increase the Executive Committee’s oversight of spending in relation to priorities for the organisation’s work.

**3. Summary of outward-facing activities for 2016-2017**

TACTYC has continued to engage in high profile, ethical and influential activities that are intended to fulfil its organisational mission to *promote the highest quality professional development for all early years practitioners in order to enhance the educational well-being of the youngest children*. These activities have involved our outward-facing objectives: advocacy and lobbying, informing and supporting; and inward-looking appraisal of our representation, systems and structures.

**3a. Responding to the policy context**

The Executive Committee continues to discuss and share news and insights from the Early Years sector (including policy developments) and related academic fields. Examples include the Government’s decision to alter the requirement for Level 3 practitioners (such as Early Years Educators) to hold GCSE Maths, English and Science at Grade C or higher. This decision was in response to pleas from the sector to recognise the difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff, including a decline in recruitment to EYE courses. TACTYC recognised the needs of the sector but also supported the aspiration from the Nutbrown Review of Qualifications (2012) for a highly and suitably qualified workforce.

TACTYC’s 2016 research project on the impact of the EYT and EYE qualifications, led by Professor Jayne Osgood from Middlesex University, was reported at last year’s conference. Since then, the study’s written [report has been published on the TACTYC website](http://tactyc.org.uk/projects/) and has attracted the attention of Save the Children (UK) as they researched the impact of the DfE’s Workforce Strategy. One finding from the TACTYC research project was that professionals in the Early Years sector often find little or confusing information about career progression. To begin to address this issue, the Exec put out a call to members for information about career progression knowledge and experience. To date we have had little response but as we build up more examples, we will seek to publish the information on the website so that it is accessible to members and non-members. Members are invited to send their experiences and knowledge of career progression in the Early Years sector to Janet Moyles.

Members will be familiar with TACTYC’s leading role in the Better without Baseline (BWB) campaign. This campaign has become integral to the wider More than a Score (MTAS) campaign, which lobbies against testing in primary schools and early years settings. Nancy Stewart has been central to the development and dissemination of information and continues to represent TACTYC at meetings of MTAS. With the recent announcement that baseline testing is to be reintroduced in the reception year, it is clear that more work remains to be done by BWB and MTAS. Fundamentally, TACTYC agrees with the central position of both campaign groups, which argue that assessment should be *for learning* and is rendered meaningless and the system flawed when inappropriate methods are used to enumerate (and compare) children’s development and schools’ teaching. For more information, see: <https://morethanascore.co.uk/>

TACTYC was also proactive in responding to the proposal by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) to introduce an international measure of early learning or ‘IELS’ score. A statement was developed in conjunction with the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network (ECSDN) and Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree network (SEFDEY). It was disseminated widely and is available on the TACTYC website. The joint statement argued that there were at least five core concerns relating to the conceptualisation and proposed implementation of the IELS tests.

TACTYC has also been concerned to see the decline of Children’s Centres and Maintained Nursery Schools in the last twelve months. Our President, Wendy Scott has attended relevant All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) and continues to gather information, make connections and support the important work of the professionals in these areas of the Early Years sector.

In 2017, TACTYC commissioned an Occasional Paper from Dr Julian Grenier (Headteacher of Sheringham Nursery School) on [‘Collaborative quality improvement’ – a way forward for England’s maintained nursery schools?](http://tactyc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Occasional-Paper-10-Grenier.doc)**’.** This paper argues peer learning and professional development require funding at every level if the DfE’s proposed ‘collaborative quality improvement’ model (DfE, 2017: 35) is to be successful.

The Executive Committee was saddened to hear of the closure of the Campaign for Real Nursery Education earlier this year and was honoured to have been presented with the CRNE’s residual funds. These funds will be used to commission work that is of direct relevance to maintained nursery education. The Executive Committee will discuss the use of the funds at its meeting in January 2018 and members are invited to send suggestions to the Chair.

In 2017, the collaboration between the Early Childhood Special Interest Group of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and TACTYC culminated in the publication of a comprehensive [Early Childhood Research Review (2003-2017)](https://www.bera.ac.uk/project/bera-tactyc-early-childhood-research-review-2003-2017). This Review focuses on five broad and highly contemporary themes:

* Professionalism: early years as a career
* Parenting and the Family in the 21st Century
* Play and pedagogy
* Learning, development and curriculum
* Assessment and School Readiness

The Review has been widely circulated and was highlighted in response to the call by The Royal Society–British Academy joint project on educational research, which investigates [‘the opportunities and challenges for teachers, researchers and policy-makers at a time when the demand for educational research is growing whilst the research capacity appears to be shrinking’](https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/royal-society-british-academy-educational-research/).

The BERA-TACTYC Review team also produced six short reports (2014) that summarised key advice and recommendations for policy. These remain [available online](https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Early-Years-Summary-Assessment-Transitions-Schools.pdf?noredirect=1) and continue to be salient in the light of recent policy decisions, such as the proposed reintroduction of baseline testing.

Thanks are due in particular to Jane Payler and Jan Georgeson for all their work in helping to bring this extensive and important Review to fruition.

In the last month, it was also announced that two members of the TACTYC Executive Committee had been invited to join the DfE’s advisory panel on Education and Childcare for the newly constituted T-Levels, which will enable young people in the UK to study a Level 3 technical qualification.

As always, TACTYC continues its lobbying and informing activities through [responses to public consultations](http://tactyc.org.uk/consultations/), details of which can be found on the website. These have included a response to the Government’s consultation on Primary Assessment in England.

**3b. High quality professional development**

TACTYC has continued to advocate and lobby for access to high quality professional development opportunities for all those working in the Early Years sector and has maintained its core activities of informing and supporting in this respect.

The journal, *Early Years*, received an extremely positive review by Taylor and Francis at the annual meeting of the Editors in February 2017. Not only is the readership increasingly widespread and global but contributions from authors around the world continue to be submitted. Meanwhile, the Editors have sustained the high quality of articles through the rigorous peer review process (see Editors’ Report for further details).

As mentioned above, the Executive Committee commissioned an Occasional Paper on the role and contributions of maintained nursery schools from Julian Grenier ([OP10](http://tactyc.org.uk/occasional-papers/)), which succeeded that written by Jayne Osgood and colleagues on *Early Years Training and Qualifications in England: Issues for policy and practice* ([OP9](http://tactyc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Occasional-Paper-9-V5-PDF.pdf)).

The conference team, led by Jane Murray has worked extremely hard once again to design and coordinate this year’s conference at the ICC in Birmingham on 4 November 2017, which will see keynotes from Tracy Jackson and Laurie Gayle (Save the Children), Dr Lynn Ang (UCL Institute of Education) and a specially made film from Mark Neville (Photographer). The conference theme acknowledges the shifting political, social and geographical worlds of many young children and the concurrent professional challenges for early childhood professionals. In addition, the conference is open as always to colleagues to submit their own presentations in various forms and provides a supportive and engaging forum in which to share ideas, concerns and findings from research and practice.

For many years TACTYC has published Reflections articles, which provide an opportunity to have a short paper peer-reviewed, web-published and responded to by like-minded professionals. At its meeting in February 2017, the Editors of Early Years and colleagues from Taylor and Francis noted that few opportunities exist for early years students, professionals and academics to write for publication in a format that sits between professional magazine articles and peer-reviewed, international journal articles but TACTYC’s Reflections articles provide one such outlet. Consequently, the Executive Committee decided to introduce a new initiative designed to encourage and support new and emerging authors with the student/practitioner Reflections article award. The initiative was designed to be a precursor to publishing a more extensive journal article and / or for a piece of writing that stands alone.

A judging panel was drawn from members of the Executive Committee, which reviewed all the submissions that covered a wide range of topics. After careful and independent scrutiny, the panel awarded 1st place to Emma Bailey for her paper entitled, *Placing Trust in Play: the playful practitioner.* Congratulations to Emma and thanks to all the authors who submitted their Reflections papers, [some of which have already been published](http://tactyc.org.uk/reflections/) on TACTYC’s website.

Special thanks go to Janet Moyles for all her work on the Occasional Papers and Reflections articles and to Rory McDowall Clark for coordinating the Students’ Reflections Articles award scheme. Members are invited to submit new Reflections articles or ideas for Occasional Papers for 2018. Please contact Janet or Rory.

In summer 2017, TACTYC was approached by *Children and Young People Now* magazine and asked to provide a summary report that selected and reviewed four significant research studies in the area of Early Learning and School Readiness. Jane Murray and Rory McDowall Clark chose:

* The *BERA-TACTYC Research Review (2003-2017)* (see above),
* The OECD’s (2017) *Starting Strong V – Transitions for Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education*,
* C. Blair and C. Raver’s (2015) article on ‘School Readiness and Self-Regulation: A Developmental Psychobiological Approach’ in the *Annual Review of Psychology*, Volume 66 and
* NATCEN’s (2017) *Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): Good Practice in Early Education*

Their article detailed some of the implications for policy and practice, which include the need to recognise the value of early education workers’ qualifications in terms of status, pay, career pathways and conditions of service; national policy frameworks should encourage high-quality local leadership; the recommendation that teacher training should include the role of executive functions in learning and development; and an open and reflective organisational culture to support good practice. Many thanks are due to Jane and Rory for their insightful and succinct response, which was produced in a very short time frame and published by CYP Now in August 2017.

TACTYC has also continued to develop its Routledge book series. Two books (by Rory McDowall Clark and Jane Murray) are already in print, two are due for release in November and January (by Jan Georgeson and Verity Campbell-Barr, and Valerie Huggins respectively) and two manuscripts are nearing completion (by Sue Soan and Gina Houston).

In addition, members of the Executive have continued to represent TACTYC at meetings of other Early Years organisations, including the Early Childhood Forum (ECF), OMEP UK (World Organisation for Early Childhood Education), Primary Umbrella Group (PUG) and to communicate or collaborate with other groups such as Early Education, BERA, Save Childhood Movement, the National College for Teaching and Leadership and various teaching unions.

**4. Internal Review of TACTYC’s Governance Systems and Structures**

In January 2017, the Executive Committee appointed consultants Counterculture to:

1. Review the current structure of the organisation and 2. Report on the alternatives, including

* Whether charitable registration is an option worth considering;
* Whether changing to an incorporated structure would be more appropriate;
* Advise on how to create an Exec / board that represents members and has the right skills and experience to manage the organisation;
* Advise on any associated changes to the current constitution.

The consultants’ subsequent advice and reports led to some immediate and some proposed, longer term changes to TACTYC’s systems.

**4a. Finances**

A new bank account was established (a ‘Treasurer’s Account’ held with existing bank, Lloyds) and access to online banking was created. This new account is more suitable for a membership organisation such as TACTYC and online banking has meant that there is the possibility to gain instant and on-going access to the financial state of affairs as well as the chance to make instant BACS payments. This account and online access has been coupled with a new electronic system for recording and monitoring income and expenditure, which will provide the basis for creating detailed budgets and financial forecasts as well as for reporting and auditing the accounts in the future. In spring 2017, the Executive Committee was made aware of the possibility of tax liability. The consultants from Counterculture have been investigating this issue on behalf of the Exec and have reviewed all the past accounts. The Executive Committee will be responding to their recommendations, which include the change of TACTYC’s status to become a charitable incorporated organisation which would offer protection to members and remove any future tax liability.

The accounts for 2016-17 are now entered into an electronic spreadsheet, which has been submitted to an independent auditor. Thanks to Jackie Eyles for all her work in the past years as Treasurer, to Nancy Stewart and Janet Moyles for their work on the new accounts and to Sharon Curtis for her advice on financial management.

Members are reminded that the cost of standard membership is £45 per annum, which includes access to the journal *Early Years* and discounted rates for the annual conference. Some members pay by Standing Order and some payments have not been updated from £30 to £45. Going forwards, we will continue to have a range of options for membership payments but hope that in the future members will pay subscriptions by Direct Debit into the new Treasurer’s account (sort code 30-90-89, Account number 31181068). If you have any queries about your membership details please contact Nancy Stewart.

This year we have also trialled online payments for the TACTYC conference by using PayPal. While this has been a very efficient method for some delegates it has not been without problems for those monitoring incoming payments and we are reviewing the use of PayPal in the future. We are grateful to Taylor and Francis for all their support in setting up and hosting the online payments page on the TACTYC website.

**4b. Officers**

The consultants recommended that the roles of Treasurer and Membership Secretary should not be combined and/or held by one person. Consequently, these two roles were made distinct and separate. In doing so, the Executive Committee agreed to cease the contract with Early Education, which had been commissioned and paid (approximately £5,000 per annum) to provide administrative support for updating the membership database. In practice, there had been a lot of duplication in the work involved. A new electronic database has been established and is being managed by Nancy Stewart (thank you, Nancy). The information contained within it is stored securely in a password protected folder in accordance with the Data Protection Act and members’ details are deleted within 3 months of the expiration of their membership where no response has been received to reminders of renewal having been sent in the interim.

**4c. Incorporation**

Counterculture consultants advised the Executive Committee that currently all members of TACTYC are liable for any debts or liabilities that TACTYC might hold in the future. This is because TACTYC is an unincorporated membership organisation, which offers no protection to members. Consequently, the Executive Committee has invited members to vote on its recommendation to change from an unincorporated membership organisation to a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). A CIO would offer protection to members who would not be liable for debts should any arise in the future; nor would TACTYC be liable to pay tax on any surplus income. Currently, all income is received and used on a not-for-profit basis and this would be consolidated and continue through a change to CIO status. The Executive Committee was made aware of the application and reporting procedures for a CIO and was advised that these are not so onerous as to be a significant disadvantage. The measures that have already been implemented, such as new systems for storing membership information and financial records are a step in the right direction and would save time and effort if / when TACTYC applied to the Charities’ Commission for CIO status. Members are therefore asked to support the Executive Committee’s recommendation to change to a CIO. This would alter the status of the elected Executive Committee members (who would become Trustees) but not the functioning of the organisation or its aims and objectives.

**4d. Diversity and representation in TACTYC’s membership**

As members will recall, the Executive recently commissioned a small-scale study that looked into the composition and views of TACTYC’s membership. Around 20% of members responded to the online survey and some also took part in telephone interviews. The findings have been published in a report on TACTYC’s website. The Executive is considering the implications and recommendations from the report, which relate to sector awareness, membership diversity & geographical spread, international, national and local activity and representation of different groups within the Early Years sector.

**Sacha Powell, October 2017.**