

Annual General Meeting of Members

University of Derby, Saturday 3 November 2018

Chair’s Report for 2017-2018

**Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of TACTYC’s activities during the year from November 2017 to October 2018. 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 summarised in the Treasurer’s statement.

Before reporting the activities, I’d like first to say thank you: to all the TACTYC members who have put trust in me as Chair over the last 3 years. This is my last report and AGM and I have been honoured to represent and lead this wonderful organisation; and to fellow Exec members past and present. They are truly remarkable people with extensive knowledge, expertise and devotion to the cause! Considering that each and every one leads a life filled with a heavy workload and / or significant caring responsibilities and other personal or professional commitments, their contributions to TACTYC are all the more incredible and laudable. The old cliché, ‘If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it’ was never truer than when said about this dedicated group of colleagues!

**Governance**

Members will recall that I reported last year on the review of governance that had been undertaken by TACTYC’s Executive and the vote on a resolution for a change in status, which members supported. After many months of discussion to enable completion of the required documentation, an application was made to the Charity Commission on 26 June 2018 for CIO status (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and we await the outcome. The Executive received invaluable, specialist advice and support from Counterculture ([www.counterculturellp.com](http://www.counterculturellp.com)) for completion and submission of the CIO application. The ‘founding Trustees’ named in the application were: Helen Bilton, Sharon Curtis, Janet Moyles, Rory McDowall Clark, Rod Parker-Rees and Wendy Scott.

During the last twelve months, the electronic financial management system has continued to be improved by Janet Moyles, who has been Acting Treasurer. We now have up-to-date, electronic records of income and expenditure and the facility to make electronic payments through online banking with Lloyds Bank. Going forwards, a more refined system of budgeting and financial forecasting would benefit the organisation. However, we urgently need to identify a permanent Treasurer with skills, expertise and time to take on this role on behalf of TACTYC. I am most grateful to Janet for taking on the role in a temporary capacity and for all the refinements to the system that she has introduced in the last 18 months.

**Executive Committee Membership and Officers**

This year, five Executive Committee members’ terms of office come to an end in November, including my own. An electronic survey has been circulated to all members who have been invited to choose up to five of the seven nominees who are standing for election (2018-2021). Election results will be announced at the AGM.

As an organisation, we are deeply indebted to Jackie Eyles, Rory McDowall Clark, Janet Moyles and Nancy Stewart for the extensive work they have carried out on behalf of TACTYC. For many years, Jackie kept records as Membership Secretary and Treasurer as well as liaising with a wide range of external partners. She ensured a personal touch in her contact with members and was effective in negotiating discounted rates for our meetings and conferences. Rory has provided in-depth knowledge of HE programmes and research; she has contributed to many initiatives, including writing the first book in TACTYC’s book series, coordinating the annual student Reflections award, reviewing books for the website and evaluating proposals for TACTYC’s research projects. As many of you will know, Janet Moyles is a former Chair of TACTYC. In recent years, as a member of the Executive she has taken on a wide variety of roles – for example, editing Occasional Papers, Reflections articles and the book series; being our lead website editor; acting as Treasurer and co-organising this year’s conference. She has given extensively of her time and made many significant contributions to the organisation. The same can be said of Nancy Stewart, our current Vice Chair and Membership Secretary. Nancy has been the driving force behind many of TACTYC’s independent and collaborative campaigns and her insight and extensive knowledge and understanding of Early Years pedagogy, policy and provision have not only benefited TACTYC but also the partners with whom she negotiated joint efforts and initiatives. Nancy will continue as Vice Chair in a co-opted role for one year to provide support for the incoming Chair, Jan Georgeson. I welcome Jan to this role, am grateful to her for agreeing to take it on and wish her well in the future.

In the last twelve months our co-opted members have also worked hard on behalf of TACTYC for which I am most appreciative. They are Gareth Betts-Davies (website sub-editor), Rosa Collins (social media), Anita Soni (Secretary) and Viki Veale (Consultations).

2018-19 Executive Committee:

* Wendy Scott – President (2018-2019)
* Jan Georgeson – Journal Editor (ex officio Exec member) and Chair Elect
* Nancy Stewart – Vice Chair (co-opted for 2018-2019)
* Rod Parker-Rees / Pamela Oberhuemer - Journal Editors (ex officio Exec members)
* Helen Bilton (elected 2016-2019)
* Sharon Curtis (elected 2017-2020)
* Jane Murray (elected 2017-2020)
* Jane Payler (elected 2017-2020)
* TBA (2018-2021)
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The Executive Committee also appoints a number of co-opted members whose profiles will be published on the website in due course together with those of the newly elected members.

**2018-19 Activities in Brief:**

***High Quality Professional Development: Journal and Conference***

TACTYC’s international, peer-reviewed journal *Early Years* has continued to flourish and gain increasing international prominence to the extent that Taylor and Francis have suggested the addition of a fifth issue per annum. The Executive Committee voted to approve this move with an assurance from the Editorial team that the burden of extra work would not be too great to manage. The cost of producing the extra edition and distributing it to members will be offset by the additional royalties that will be generated.

The Editors continue to work extremely hard to produce very high quality issues and TACTYC’s 40th anniversary was marked by special editions being published in book form by Routledge (*Digital Technologies* and *ECEC in the USA*); and, appropriately in this 40th year, a special issue entitled, ‘Lessons and Legacies of Early Childhood History’ was published. Authorship of articles is coming from an increasingly diverse range of countries and the readership continues to grow in number and reach. A special issue on *Early Childhood Policies in Low and Middle Income Countries* has supported this diversification.

This academic year will see the retirement of Pamela Oberheumer as one of the long-serving Editors. Pamela has provided many years of dedicated work to the journal with current co-editors Rod and Jan. Her role has required great knowledge and skill to ensure coherence across ‘the rich variety of themes, methodological approaches and professional issues currently under focus in early years research’ to which she referred in her October 2007 editorial. We are most grateful to Pamela and wish her well in her impending retirement.

Thanks are also due to Taylor and Francis for their sustained support and partnership in publishing the journal; and to Rod Parker-Rees and Jan Georgeson for their continued efforts in bringing to fruition high quality issues of the journal that inspire, challenge, connect and support us all. **Please contact Rod if you are interested in becoming a reviewer – new recruits are needed and welcomed!**

***Annual Conference***

This year’s conference was organised in acknowledgement and celebration of TACTYC’s 40th anniversary and the programme was designed to pay tribute to the founding members and to those who have supported the organisation in the last 4 decades. The University of Derby was chosen as the venue for the conference for two reasons: Derby was the birthplace of TACTYC, originally ‘Tutors of Advanced Courses for Teaching Young Children’; and the location provided an extension to TACTYC’s regular meeting and conference venues (mostly in London and Birmingham). This year’s conference team – Sharon Curtis, Janet Moyles and Rory McDowall Clark – have worked exceedingly hard to bring about a two-day programme of keynote lectures, presentations, posters, workshops, exhibits and a conference dinner at Jury’s Inn Hotel. I am very grateful to the team for the extensive work they have done to organise, publicise and manage the conference; and also for the assistance given by colleagues at the University of Derby, notably Ruby Oates.

***Campaigning and Advocating: Collaborations and Consultations***

Throughout the year TACTYC has continued to get involved in activities intended to provide informed commentary and advice on Early Years issues. Some of these activities have happened in collaboration with other Early Years organisations. Notable examples include the continued efforts to highlight our belief that the current regime of testing children in primary schools is at best ill-advised and that children’s complex learning, development and wellbeing are so much ‘More than a Score’. We are most grateful to Nancy Stewart who has worked tirelessly for TACTYC, campaigning against standardised testing (including the reintroduction of Baseline Assessment). Up-to-date information and advice can be found at the following website: <https://www.morethanascore.org.uk/>. TACTYC’s response to the Government’s consultation on Primary Assessment was similarly informed, insightful and cognisant of the sector’s challenges, arguing that, ‘Any changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) must be undertaken carefully and only with good evidence that the change would be an improvement which would outweigh the costs of the training and development necessary to support implementation’.

In July 2018, members of the Exec met with the DfE about the proposed changes to the Early Learning Goals and suggested that, ‘teacher training may include limited focus on child development and that it is therefore essential that the EYFS support (or at least not undermine) understanding of young children’s development. It is particularly important that the EYFS offers reliable guidance to help all practitioners, including level 2, 3 and 4, with identifying and supporting next steps of development for children with special educational needs. We pointed out that removing the aspect of Shape, Space and Measure results in less alignment with KS1 maths as well as the computing curriculum. We also discussed the need to support understanding about communication and language development by retaining the aspect of Understanding, with comprehension contained alongside decoding in a single Reading ELG.’

TACTYC also submitted responses to other public consultations or reports, including:

* Ofsted’s report on curriculum in the reception year, which was met with a carefully researched TACTYC paper, entitled ‘Bald Beginnings’. The submission was followed by a meeting of representatives of TACTYC and Early Education with Gill Jones from Ofsted. Two key messages that were conveyed concerned the poor conceptualisations of maths and literacy teaching in the reception year; and the unfortunate tone of Ofsted’s report, which implied that a new curriculum for the reception year that drew on KS1 priorities would benefit young children – a view vehemently opposed in TACTYC’s written submission.
* Labour Party consultation on education and skills - TACTYC argued that ‘in the early years, education for children is inseparable from care and should be considered alongside work with parents and communities. Investment from birth prevents the need for reactive intervention at a later stage, which is expensive in personal and social as well as financial terms’.
* Select Committee for Science and Technology Inquiry into [evidence-based early-years intervention](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/evidence-based-early-years-intervention-17-19/) – TACTYC reminded the Committee that, ‘The low levels of qualifications and pay of many staff, together with the decision by government not to grant Qualified Teacher Status to Early Years Teachers who meet comparable standards to graduate staff working in other phases, show a lack of esteem for people working in the early years, and a lack of appreciation of the complexity of their work.’
* This respect for Early Years professionals’ knowledge and understanding and young children’s right to high quality education and care was echoed when TACTYC signed a letter by Save the Children to the Minister for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi MP calling on him to reinstate his earlier commitment to ‘grow the Early Years graduate workforce’.
* Government consultation about Strengthening QTS and improving career progression – TACTYC’s response indicated, for example, that the proposed induction framework did not, ‘adequately reflect the different levels of contact with parents and outside agencies that early years and primary teachers have in comparison to our secondary colleagues. Nor…reflect that while secondary colleagues generally focus on one or two subject areas in depth, teachers in early years, key stage one and two generally focus on a broader range of subject areas and areas of learning and development.’

***Informing and Supporting: TACTYC Books and Papers***

Since our last AGM, three new books have been published in the TACTYC book series. Congratulations to the authors / editors and contributors and thanks to them and the series editors, Jane Payler and Janet Moyles for their work and for the royalties from sales, which come to TACTYC. They are:

* **Gina Houston (2018) *Racialisation in Early Years Education: Black Children’s Stories from the Classroom*** explores the unique experiences of young black children during their first year of school and supports an understanding of how entry into the early years environment impacts on identity.
* **Jan Georgeson and Verity Campbell-Barr (eds.) (2017) *Places for two-year-olds in the early years: Supporting Learning and Development*** drew on the TACTYC Research Project and explores how this often overlooked age group is presented in policy and practice, and discusses why working with two-year-olds can be both exciting and highly rewarding.
* **Val Huggins and David Evans (eds.) (2017) *Early childhood education and care for sustainability. International Perspectives*** explores issues and concerns surrounding Education for Sustainable Development in early childhood, providing a range of perspectives on how we can live and promote more healthy, just and sustainable lives.

In addition to the books, TACTYC commissioned an Occasional Paper by Dr Julian Grenier entitled, [*‘Collaborative quality improvement’ – a way forward for England’s maintained nursery schools?*](http://tactyc.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Occasional-Paper-10-Grenier.doc) **This paper** explores one possible future for nursery schools: as the leaders of quality improvement for the whole of the early years sector in England. Meanwhile, several Reflections papers were published on the website and the year has culminated with the Student Reflections Competition. The winner will receive her award at this year’s conference. Congratulations to Megan Taddeo, a post-graduate student from Winchester University on first place and to runner-up, Rachel Hingston from Plymouth University. Special thanks to Rory McDowall Clark for coordinating this competition and to members of the Exec who read and scored the submissions.

***Original Research***

1. In July 2018, TACTYC published an invitation to tender for a new research project, which will be part-financed by the residual funds that the Campaign for Nursery Education gifted to TACTYC when it ceased operating in 2016. The project focuses on *Evidencing the effects of maintained nursery schools' roles in Early Years sector improvements.*The principal research questions for this study are:
* How do maintained nursery schools lead and contribute to sector improvement activities?
* What evidence is there of the impacts (positive or negative) of such initiatives / activity?'

The project will run from December 2018 to July 2019 and the total investment is £12,000 (inclusive of VAT). The project team will publish an Occasional Paper on the TACTYC website and share their findings at TACTYC’s 2019 conference. Thanks to the working group who reviewed the proposals.

1. TACTYC is also working with Early Education and the Teaching Schools Alliance to develop and seek funding for research on the reception year. Thanks are due once again to Nancy Stewart for leading on this initiative.

**Sacha Powell, October 2018.**