

Charity number: 1181278

# Chair’s Report to the Annual General Meeting 2012-21

# Saturday 19th June 2021

I have had the honour as Chair both to lead and support the Board of Trustees with some pivotal changes to the constitution and the strategic direction of TACTYC. I have introduced the ‘Chairs Letter’ for all our members as part of our processes for providing clarity and transparency in our strategic planning and accountability. Nancy Stewart, as previous Chair has provided invaluable guidance and I would like to say a huge ‘thank you’ for her enduring support. In addition to the nuts and bolts work of managing the Treasury and Secretariat the current reorganisation is identifying teams with responsibility for focusing on each of TACTYC’s priority areas: Advocacy and Lobbying; Supporting; and Informing and I do hope to share some good news about new Trustee recruitment in the near future. In addition, TACTYC has continued to engage proactively in numerous activities and project developments. This report is intended to give an overview of TACTYC’s activities during the year from June 2020 to June 2021, accounting for how membership money has been spent. It is important to note that all the work of TACTYC Trustees is carried out on a voluntary basis. The journal editors receive a small honorarium, from Taylor and Francis in recognition of the many hours they work to maintain the high standard of our journal.

## 1) The Board of Trustees – meetings and membership

The Board of Trustees met online on six occasions in the past year: July 2020, September 2020, October 2020, January 2021, March 2021 and May 2021. These meetings were all full Board meetings.

In addition, Trustees have met for ‘Equality Diversity and Inclusion’ training across a series of nine sessions, facilitated by external advisors, which has been an agenda item on our strategic plan for 2018 and 2019. It is pleasing to report that we have begun our journey in ensuring that anti-racism, equality, diversity and inclusion are the roots and branches of all TACTYC’s work.

The Board of Trustees currently consists of:

***Ex Officio members***:

Wendy Scott, OBE, President

Dr Rod Parker-Rees, Journal Editor (Editors’ Representative)

Jane Rogers, Administrator (hourly paid role)

***Elected members:***

Dr Sharon Curtis, Vice Chair (2019-2022)

Dr Natalie Canning, Treasurer (2020- 2023)

Viki Veale, Membership Director, Election Secretary (2018-2021)

Dr Elizabeth Carruthers (2018-2021)

Dr. Rory McDowall Clark, Book Review, Reflections (2018-2021)

***Appointed members:***

Penny Borkett, Secretarial Team/Blog Director (2020-2022)

Dr Karen Boardman, Chair (2020-2023)

Angela Scollan, Conference Director (2020-2022)

### Board of Trustee Changes

***Elected members*:** This year we have three places on the Board of Trustees available for election/recruitment. Trustees have developed a recruitment pack, as part of our EDI training, to support this process.

***Appointed members*:** We are extremely grateful to the appointed members, who have taken on major responsibilities to enable TACTYC to function effectively. Appointments for the period ahead will be decided by the Board of Trustees.

**Farewell:** I am sad to report that we will be saying a farewell and thank you to Dr Rory McDowall Clark, who will be stepping down as a Trustee. Rory has been a TACTYC member for over twenty years and has served on the Executive Committee and as a Trustee since 2012. She is a deeply thoughtful, principled, rigorous and considerate colleague, who challenges current top down pressures on young children, and is a strong advocate for informed leadership in nursery settings.

Rory’s experience and sensitivity have been very valuable in her work with TACTYC over the years. Many students have benefited from her thoughtful support through her work on our Reflections papers, and her proactive encouragement of the Student Reflections Award, which she established. She has also contributed through insightful book reviews. In 2016, Rory wrote the first book in a new series edited by TACTYC: ‘Exploring the Contexts for Early Learning: challenging the school readiness agenda’, which is even more relevant today. We are grateful for Rory’s long and dedicated service to TACTYC and know that her influence will continue. A huge thank you for all that you have done for TACTYC, Rory, and for the thoughtful, yet passionate way in which you make your voice heard.

## 2) Key activities 2020-2021

**Establishing ways of working:**  We have worked hard this year to improve the alignment of our responsibilities as a charitable organisation. We have updated our strapline, with the help of members’ input to ‘Together and Committed to Young Children’ to reflect the review of the vision, values and ethos of TACTYC – anti-racism, equality, diversity, inclusion and social justice.

We have developed a new Strategic Plan which continues to identify issues and actions under our key aims of Advocacy/Lobbying, Informing, and Supporting. We have a budget plan linked to these projected activities, and both Strategic Plan and budget are reviewed and monitored at each Board meeting. We have also developed and implemented new policies on Conflict of Interest and Financial Procedures. All of these are reviewed annually. In order to allow Trustees – particularly the Treasurer and Membership Secretary – to focus on the strategic issues of TACTYC’s work, we appointed a Membership Administrative Assistant in 2019 to support with maintaining financial records and the membership database. Thank you to Jane for all her invaluable support and hard work this year for TACTYC.

Other activities throughout the year reflect work towards our aims:

## Advocacy/Lobbying

We continue to focus on research-informed policy and practice for early years in response to a number of government plans and policy documents, including the revised Early Years Foundation Stage, Ofsted Inspection Framework and the new Core Content Framework. TACTYC have been involved with the new Birth to Five Matters non-statutory guidance, More than a Score and responses to Ofsted proposals regarding inspection of Initial Teacher Training. Copies of all these consultations, responses, press releases and letters can be found on our website.

**Baseline Assessment**: We remain concerned by the DfE decision to forge ahead with baseline assessment in reception classes. Viki Veale has taken over the mantle from Nancy Stewart and has been leading on TACTYC’s collaborative efforts with other organisations through More Than a Score (MTAS) to encourage more informed debate about the implications of baseline assessment, and to lobby in opposition to baseline. The work has included numerous press and broadcast statements, briefing members of Parliament in Westminster, and meeting with the Shadow Schools Minister. In addition, TACTYC uses social media and its website to continue to promote widespread opposition through postcard campaigns, videos, Vlogs and petitions. Such active engagement through TACTYC has helped to keep the baseline debate on the agenda and in the press.

**Early Years Foundation Stage:** TACTYC is part of the EYFS Coalition which was formed by 14 sector organisations to inform debate on the government’s proposed changes to the Early Learning Goals and Educational Programmes of the EYFS. The coalition produced two major pieces of work – a literature review updating evidence on early learning (*Getting it Right in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a review of the evidence,* Pascal and Bertram) and a report from a survey of practitioners (*Mapping the landscape: practitioners’ views on the Early Years Foundation Stage*, Bamsey, Georgeson, Healy and O’Caoimh). TACTYC submitted a detailed response to the DfE consultation on the proposed changes.

**Birth to Five Matters:** TACTYCcolleagues andTACTYC as an organisation have been supporting the new Birth to Five Matters non-statutory guidance – ‘by the sector, for the sector’. This has been both a privilege and a necessary part of TACTYC’s work to support the professional development of the sector. We do hope that you have had the opportunity to read and disseminate the guidance, where appropriate. We intend to continue our support for Birth to Five Matters roll-out and next steps.

**Campaign for a professional workforce:** TACTYC has joined the Early Years Workforce Commission, a coalition of organisations set up to undertake a review of the workforce challenges facing the sector and develop comprehensive and workable solutions. Our Vice-Chair, Sherron Curtis and Penny Borkett continue to represent TACTYC.

**OFSTED approach to inspection of Initial Teacher Education:** TACTYC submitted a robust response to consultation on Ofsted’s proposed guidelines for inspectors which included repeated reference to an inadequate judgement for any HEI which did not teach only systematic, synthetic phonics in the teaching of early reading (see website). Subsequently, Wendy Scott has been in correspondence with Ofsted officials, restating TACTYC’s concerns and seeking to clarify the evidence and facts regarding requirements and pedagogy. The correspondence is ongoing. Wendy has also written to Ofsted on behalf of TACTYC urging explicit guidance for inspectors on working to help to prevent (often unconscious) racial bias and inequalities. We continue to monitor and respond to the DfE Core Content Framework and the Early Career Framework.

**Sector engagement:** Working with other organisations across the early years sector has become an important way to amplify our voice, and TACTYC has been active in a number of collaborations this year:

* Early Childhood Forum (ECF), represented by Wendy Scott
* Primary Umbrella Group (PUG) meetings, represented by Wendy Scott
* More Than a Score (MTAS), with Viki Veale as a member of the MTAS core group
* EYFS Coalition, represented by Karen Boardman
* Early Years Workforce Commission (EYWC), represented by Penny Borkett and Sherron Curtis
* First 1001 Days Campaign, represented by Karen Boardman
* National Children’s Bureau (NCB) Putting #ChildrenAtTheHeartofRecovery represented by Karen Boardman

In addition to these meetings where TACTYC is formally represented, individual Trustees maintain many other links which help to inform our work and disseminate information about TACTYC’s activities.

**Consultations:** This year we have responded to consultations focused on:

* The Early Years Foundation Stage reforms
* Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework and Handbook and the Core Content Framework
* Impact of Covid-19 on babies and their families
* The Royal Foundation.

We look forward to working with The Centre for Early Childhood initiative launched by the Duchess of Cambridge this week. We warmly welcome comments and additions from our membership before responses are submitted whenever time allows. Much effort, expertise and thought goes into writing TACTYC’s consultation responses and it is good to see them getting the attention they deserve.

## Informing

**Journal:** 2020-21 has been a year of exciting developments for ‘Early Years’ – increased submissions, increased downloads worldwide and also growing in size (additional 20 pages available for each issue). It is pleasing to report that the Editorial Board will be expanding. We also have a forthcoming ‘Special Issue’ focusing on workforce development in East Asian countries coming up.

**Conference:** The 2020 Conference, on the theme of ‘Voices from and for the Early Years’:

Professional Development for the 21st Century ‘what we need, what we want and what we get’ was TACTYCs first ever online conference. The conference featured a keynote presentation from Dr Carla Solvason and Dr Rebecca Webb - ‘You always listen, you never don’t hear’ and an opportunity for a wider discussion forum, which was well-received by delegates. The keynotes and recording are hosted on our website. The success of these discussions led to the development of our ‘webinar series’. Many thanks to conference organiser Angela Scollan and the conference committee.

**Webinar Series**: TACTYC were delighted to present a new series of webinars free to all members and the wider early years sector. Our first webinar, entitled *'Do Better- Tackling Racism in Early Years Education and Care'* was led by Diane Garrison- winner of last year’s Student Reflections Award. This event was highly successful – thank you Diane. This was followed up with an equally successful webinar focused on the new *‘Birth to Five Matters – guidance by the sector, for the sector’.* Thank you to Nancy Stewart for an informative session. Please do look out for further webinar series updates on Twitter and our website. We would also welcome your suggestions as members for future topics.

**ECEC Workforce research project:** Our current TACTYC-funded research project isbeing carried out by Dr Joanne Josephidou, Dr Lucy Rodriguez-Leon, Dr Stephanie Bennett, Polly Bolshaw, Dr Jackie Musgrave and Professor Jonathan Rix, entitled *‘Where measurement stops: A review of systematic reviews exploring ECEC workforce qualifications and training, the quality of provision and outcomes for children’.* This is due to be completed shortly and we look forward to sharing this with you all.

**Next research project:** In line with TACTYC’s advocacy work for professional development and to provide evidence to inform policy development, we are currently in the process of reviewing all our past TACTYC research projects for reach and impact, with a view to exploring the context for future projects. We look forward to sharing the next research bid opportunity with you.

### TACTYC book series

We are also exploring further book suggestions with Routledge for the TACTYC book series. We would be interested to hear members’ suggestions for topics that will fit with the overall series approach of research evidence into practice: contact Karen Boardman for further information on the development of the series.

**Occasional Papers:** We aim to produce two Occasional Papers each year and this year we have published online and in paper format:

* No: 15: **The re/constructed role of nursery schools as local community hubs in the current context of austerity.** Dr Kate Hoskins, Dr Alice Bradbury and Mr Lewis Fogarty: Brunel University London.
* No: 16: **Questioning the relationship between pre-compulsory education and school.** Victoria Bamsey, Lewis Fogarty, Mabel Encinas and Mandy Andrews.

Many thanks to Janet Moyles for overseeing the production of these Occasional Papers.

## Supporting

**Website:** Our website continues to provide a forum for publishing news and documents, and for supporting reflection and discussion within and far beyond our membership. Taylor & Francis provide us with excellent backup, updating and training. We are in the process of ‘revamping’ the website to ensure that its success and vibrancy is maintained for our international audience.

**Blog and Covid-19 response:** We introduced a blog as a website feature intended to support professional discussion. Following the first few blogs published, in order to allow the voice of front-line practitioners to be heard in response to the Covid-19 crisis the Board decided to publish a series of blogs from those working with children, families, and communities. Thank you to Penny Borkett for coordinating the blog and please do look out for further information on the next focus for our blogs.

**Reflections articles and Reflections award:** The *Reflections* pages continue to be a popular part of the website, offering a space to share research and debate issues. So far this year there have been three papers published with more to follow. The Student Reflections Award has grown in recognition with the number of entries increasing steadily. The closing date for this year's award will be July 31st 2021.

### 3) Finances and Membership

**Finances:** Under the careful guidance of our Treasurer, Natalie Canning, the Board of Trustees has made good use of available funds to support the wide-ranging initiatives reported above. We have developed closer budget planning linked to our strategic priorities, and employing an administrative assistant to manage ongoing record-keeping will allow the Treasurer to concentrate on monitoring budget and expenditure, which is reported and reviewed at each Board meeting. We have now established online payments for membership and conferences, which should also streamline the administrative tasks. Membership fees are important to fund the activities of the Board of Trustees, while income from the journal makes a large contribution which enables TACTYC to undertake larger projects such as funding research.

**Membership and fees –** Our membership currently stands at around 150, with a high proportion paying concessionary fees. A strategy to encourage new membership is being considered. To encourage student engagement during the Covid-19 crisis, a temporary 6-month membership was offered for a fee of £5*.* Given the ongoing impact of the pandemic across the sector, the decision was made to repeat this offer at the end of the six-month period and it is still in place for the time being.

#### Congratulations to Professor Emeritus, Janet Moyles OBE

We are delighted to announce that our very own Janet Moyles has been honoured with an OBE for services to Education. Janet has been a member of TACTYC (occupying various roles) since 1988. She chaired TACTYC between 1996-2003, a period of consolidation and growth. Janet set up TACTYC’s first website and has been pivotal for our continued success to date - her drive, energy, passion and expertise is infectious. Congratulations Janet!

#### A final ‘thank you’

In my first year as TACTYC Chair, I wish to highlight the consistent and passionate nature of our Board of Trustees – all on a voluntary basis and most in full-time busy day jobs. It is an utmost privilege to work alongside Trustee colleagues who generously give their time, efforts and expertise to review and challenge provision for children, families, their communities and the professional workforce. Thank you to Trustees for all that they do behind the scenes and to TACTYC members for your continued support.

A further ‘thank you’ to all our previous Trustees for their dedication, time, space and expertise which have positioned TACTYC where we are today.

***Dr Karen Boardman, June 2021***