

M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award- Profit and Loss: Institutional Labour in England and Wales 1913-2004

Project Title				
Profit and Loss: Institutional Labour in England and Wales 1913-2004				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution		Nottingham Trent University		
Lead regional city		Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>
				Nottingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation		Open Theatre		
Website URL		https://www.opentheatre.co.uk/		
THE RESEARCH PROJECT				
<p>This practice-based doctoral project involves archival research and the writing of a thesis, alongside the development of one or more theatre performances in collaboration with Open Theatre. Our essential focus in both elements is on the question of how work in institutions and the wider community is organised for, experienced and understood by, and used to either support or hold back people with learning difficulties. We will have a particular focus on the midland counties.</p> <p>For modern commentators restrictions on work are a mechanism by which physical/mental issues are socially constructed into disability and inability. Covid-19 magnifies this problem. Unemployment and lost job-related training is disproportionately experienced by the 'disabled'. The consequences will be long-lasting, possibly generational. A project investigating how work/training for those with learning difficulties (LD) developed in the period 1913-2004 is timely.</p> <p>The archival and written thesis element of you work will focus on the records of the various institutions that existed to support, house, contain and train people with learning difficulties in the long twentieth-century. The aims of the project in this sense are threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To investigate the use, extent, and nature of work/training regimes in English and Welsh institutions and colonies from 1913 (the Mental Deficiency Act) to the NHS in 1948. •To identify changes in institutional activity from 1948-2004. The latter date reflects the closure of the Industrial Therapy Organisation and the full integration of work into community living processes. •To understand, through this dual analysis, how disability and work for those with LD was constructed in the professional and public imagination. <p>While the particular questions you ask of this data will need to be tailored in conjunction with the supervisors and the need to use perspectives from this material to underpin a performative element, they are likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How was work/training organised in the complex matrix of institutions housing people with LD pre-1948? How did inmates and former inmates feel about the nature and value of work? How did work/training affect life chances? 				

- How NHS, and its acquisition of more than 100 establishments each with its own rules and practices, affect the lives, work regimes, and occupations of people both within institutions and afterwards?
- How did work/training as features of institutional life change post-1948? What impact did the selective process of closing down institutions from the 1980s have?
- How does the character and meaning of work for YPWLD change over our period?

The depth and scope of archival work will be tensioned with the need to produce two parts to an overall thesis, but you can expect a year of intensive archival engagement at least. Both HEI supervisors have extensive experience in this thematic area.

In turn the material and perspective drawn from this phase of the doctorate will feed into one or more theatre performances, developed in conjunction with Open Theatre and the HEI supervisors. While the content, form and focus of this performative element is contingent (on your own interests and experience, perspectives drawn from the sources, and the interests of Open Theatre) your particular task will be to use the lens of young people with learning difficulties (YPWLD) and the non-verbal medium.

Open Theatre have multi-decade record of working within a particular mission to develop, promote and sustain the creativity and artistry of YPWLD. Non-verbal physical theatre involves play, simple props, music and movement and is a highly adaptive and individual process, supported by trained facilitators. The work of the organisation, both in terms of process/methods and detailed practice, is informed by, interprets and seeks to shape contemporary conversations about the nature of disability, difference and creativity. Utilising, developing and contesting existing models - The Social Model of Disability, The Holistic Model of Learning Disability, Clowning, and Intense Interaction - the organisation's leitmotif is 'Doing difference differently'.

The practice and performance commissioned and delivered by Open Theatre (<https://www.opentheatre.co.uk/what-we-do/talent-lab/becausewecancan/>) is underpinned by the basic belief that realising the creative potential of YPWLD is not simply about adjusting current structures to be more inclusive or accessible. Rather, it is learning what is different about each of us, and how collectively people and organisations can collaborate to build something new as equal partners. You will engage with the organisation at a time when a new forward plan has placed concepts of work at the forefront of its practice.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Lead HEI Supervisor:	Professor Steven King
Lead HEI Supervisor Email:	Steven.king@ntu.ac.uk