



## The Time of our Lives?

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[www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies)

## Some Previous Projects

- Life as a Disabled Child
- Whatever Next? Young disabled people leaving care
- Future Selves: career choices of young disabled people
- The Career Success of Disabled High Flyers
- Building Bridges: disability and old age
- Disability and the Life Course: global perspectives
- Disability: a life course approach
- Time of our Lives...

# The Time of Our Lives – Beyond Text?

life stories ...research interviews... performed lives...  
audio recordings... messy data... clean transcripts...  
subjective readings... memories... moments...  
inspirations... performances...?

## Some examples - birth

- I was born up here in (Yorkshire) and apparently the doctors said, my feet were turned completely the other way, so the doctor said 'she wont live, you'll have her for a few days and she definitely wont live'
- I was born in 1965, in a time where people who were born disabled were put away quite a lot of the time.
- In the end they used forceps and I got a lack of oxygen. I think they were experimenting because they were black (my parents) and they didn't know their rights. In the 60s, black people were not treated very well.

## Some examples – home and away

- I should have got more access to see my family, they should have made arrangements so that I could go home more often. I felt like I was being punished for being disabled. When I was younger I thought how come I am the only one to be sent away and no one else. In a child's mentality I worked out it must be because I can't walk, they are punishing me.
- My headmistress at school. If it wasn't for her seeing that I had some potential, I don't know what I would be doing now, it's scary to think that your whole life depended on this one person

## Some examples - school

- I think I used to go home about twice a term for weekend. I never saw my parents as my parents because I didn't know who they were. They were just people who used to come and see me and my sister used to come along...
- I stopped going home at leave weekends basically I was only going home what, once every six, seven weeks... I used to go home to sit in my bedroom and not – not really communicate with them really, just a sulking teenager. Yeah. And I think it did upset my parents actually. But they didn't really know how to broach it and I was completely inarticulate
- my memories are that I was always separated away from the class...always segregated from the class which is a bit, you know – but that's my major memory of it really and being made to feel different...

## Some examples - work

- THEN: I worked in a typing pool. I did shorthand and typing. I was the only disabled person there. So they didn't have any – you know, I had to struggle up and down the steps and things like that...I did manage, you know, as you do, don't you... (May, born 1940s)
- NOW: I've felt more disabled in this job than I've ever felt in any job... Because of the access to the...building
- THEN: The careers officer dumped me in a work centre. Do you know what a work centre is? I was packing nuts and bolts for £11 a month, that's what they did to me... After spending all that money on me, educating me, that was the best they could do, that's the best career move. (Flora, born 1960s)
- NOW: (... further education, degree...) I got my first job within two months working as a project worker for (a London) Black Disabled People Association

## Some examples - comparisons

- it wasn't on the agenda, so you didn't have disabled people around you. And you didn't have anyone pushing for anything...
- ...looking around, the younger generation now have got a better chance because they haven't, or their not supposed to, discriminate.... People didn't want to see you, you know, all them years ago.
- Britain as a whole has changed but when I was growing up it was very white, very conservative with a small C, very kind of nice, twee, British, this is how things should be. And don't let anyone else upset that apple cart kind of thing.
- I also think we're quite an exciting world now because I do think lots and lots of things are – have changed. And I just think we're in a really frightening time because I think there's also potential for us to go backwards as well.



## Over to you...

- How can workshops help us move 'Beyond Text'?
- Who should be involved and what roles do they have?
- Can we mix 'academic' and 'artistic' workshop formats?
- How creative or ambitious should we try to be?
- What record should be kept of the process?
- What are the longer term possibilities?
- What about practical and financial issues?



## What next...?

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