

## Time to Think

Open University Journeys in British and Irish prisons during the years of conflict, 1972-2000

### Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee: **Michael Culbert**  
Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**  
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#### **Important**

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Michael Culbert Clip

**Clip title:** Cascading the Social Sciences in the H Blocks

**Duration:** 00:01:52

**Clip start point in full interview:** 00:09:10

**Clip end point in full interview:** 00:11:01

**Interview identifier:** 025\_S\_02

**Description:**

Michael Culbert explains the reason for and importance of studying Social Sciences in the Republican Wings of the H Blocks in the 1980s and students cascading their learning down the Wings - sometimes even re-writing the course materials.

**Transcript:**

The reason for the Social Sciences was because it opened all the doors to us going into our political education programme. It also broadened our perspectives and a grasp of how things work structurally in society. We all knew what we were opposed to but we needed that to be structured although not everybody was unaware, but we had to give it to The Open University, they give it from A-Z and it was very, very structured, very understandable. And I think they were brown covered manuals [D102], weren't they?

*They were different colours for each block [Open University single unit of teaching], the brown ones were probably the ones you remember most.*

Yes, the brown ones are the ones I remember because they were very important collateral, they were what we used in the wings. We took our notes out of them and, the other wee thing which I didn't really explain to you, is once we started into it, had a grasp of it, we then delivered our own classes. So whilst I was doing the formal education and doing the essays and learning directions with yourselves, then in the evenings I was also doing my own classes, the one on liberalism, conservatism, all the isms we were doing and we were then rewriting them. We were then, you probably know this anyway, but we were then rewriting the OU programme in easy steps for people who wouldn't, maybe not everybody would be into neo conservatism explanations, so giving the book was no use, so we then had to write. And bear in mind there were no computers and if we wrote out stuff then other men did the copying and then maybe one guy would sit and read it out and two would copy, so then there would be two copies getting done to go to other wings.