

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: **Diana Carson**

Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**

Date of interview: **27/01/2014**

Important

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Clip title: I just rejoiced when people argued with me

Duration: 00:01:54

Clip start point in full interview: 00:04:16

Clip end point in full interview: 00:06:27

Interview identifier: 053_T_01

Description:

Diana Carson, Open University Associate Lecturer, describes being invited by the Prison Education Officer to take evening classes in Family Relationships in the Republican wings of the H Blocks (the Maze and Long Kesh Prison) in the 1980s and her enjoyment of debating with her students.

Transcript:

At one point you were invited in by the Prison Education Department to go as a teacher in the evening to teach about family relationships or relationships between, with children and you had a group of men [from Republican Wings], just any men but with some OU men, what sort of experience was that?

Well it was very easy in some ways, challenging in some ways because they had good questions, but easy because I had worked a lot with pre-school, early school and primary school children and their parents in the States and the differences were not very much between there and here in every respect, so it was a joyous occasion, but I love teaching anyway.

So you were teaching a group of men about relating to children with whom they hadn't any contact really because they were—?

That's right. And how they can respect a child and a child's rights and the child's interests and they didn't have to sacrifice their own opinions or their own values to do that, they could keep their own values and share them with the children, so it was, I hope a growing experience for them and for me both.

And was that different from your OU teaching?

Well I don't think so except maybe the prisoners being one to one could challenge me more directly and argue a bit more directly than someone in a class of students where they might be intimidated by the fact that there was maybe a dozen other people there, but I never felt threatened by either one, I just rejoiced when people argued with me because it meant they were thinking about something and that is why I was there to help them think about something, it was fun.

