

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: **John Kremer**

Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**

Date of interview: **19/02/2014**

Important

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Clip title: Do you feel that you learned anything from tutoring in prison?

Duration: 00:01:47

Clip start point in full interview: 00:20:35

Clip end point in full interview: 00:22:21

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Description:

John Kremer, Open University Associate Lecturer, reflects on learning about the normality of the issues faced by students in the H Blocks and Compounds of the Maze and Long Kesh Prison and the need to treat each person as an individual.

Transcript:

As an academic, as a Psychologist, do you feel that you learned anything from the experience of tutoring in prison?

Hugely, yes. Just from meeting those people and talking to them and just experiencing that whole environment and seeing how people dealt with that. The normality of a number of the issues is probably what would have struck me most powerfully. The business I was mentioning before about noise, finding time in a day to actually study where naively you would assume that would be no problem at all, but it actually had to be fitted in around a routine in the H Block or the Compound. That was problematic for a number of them and you know it would reflect sometimes in difficulties in meeting deadlines in the way that students outside would also have talked about. So those sorts of things were surprising I think.

Was there anything that maybe fed back into the way in which you would have approached tutoring other OU students, anything that you learnt from them particularly or was, it the other way round or indeed your students at Queen's?

I think the idea that it was treating each student entirely in terms of individual circumstance that it would be very easy to categorise because all these people happened to be in the same environment when the issues they were doing, sometimes they were home issues that they were still dealing with, these things were still impacting on them. So it is dealing with each student and the personal circumstance, I think was probably the most important lesson.