

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: **Ximena Arias-Manzano**
Interviewed by: **Pat Jess**
Date of interview: **11/02/2013**

Important

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.

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Clip title:	First visit to the H Blocks
Duration:	00:01:12
Clip start point in full interview:	00:04:36
Clip end point in full interview:	00:05:28
Interview identifier:	085_T_01

Description: Ximena Arias-Manzano recalls her first visit to tutor an Open University student of Spanish in the H Blocks and how she found the environment of the prison, with the gates and locks and the security very alienating, how even as a visitor she felt she had lost her freedom, and what it must be like to feel as a prisoner.

Transcript:

Do you remember your first visit?

Absolutely, yes. It is a memory that will stay there forever, because apart from the importance of being in the Maze Prison [H Blocks the Maze and Long Kesh Prison] from the Northern Irish perspective, it was my very first time in an institution like that and my ideas were just from TV or films what a prison would be like. So the first time I walked in I just thought "Wow, this is completely different". But the first feeling I had was the feeling of my freedom being taken away. I just felt that I had no freedom, my whole persona was just, you know, a name or a number perhaps. But I just felt wow, what it would be like to be a prisoner, because I felt a little bit out of breath at the beginning, seeing the whole process of walking in through the doors; people shouting numbers for doors to open, and then the feeling of being stuck in the middle, in between the two gates, until somebody shouted another number to open another gate.