

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: **Eugene McIlhenny**

Interviewed by: **Philip O'Sullivan**

Date of interview: **06/03/2013**

Important

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Eugene McIlhenny Clip

Clip title: Teaching and learning about stereotyping

Duration: 00:01:53

Clip start point in full interview: 00:21:00

Clip end point in full interview: 00:23:36

Interview identifier: 104_T_01

Description:

Eugene McIlhenny, Open University Associate Lecturer, talks of the value of a student learning about stereotyping, and then finds he needs to learn this lesson too.

Transcript:

And he did say to me that one thing he had learned from the course was, he understood now what it was to stereotype a person. And I thought, you know, that is a learning experience which for someone in his situation is very important, he kind of understands now stereotyping has certain problems and he is trying to come to the truth of things. And I suppose – paradoxically on reflection – I was as guilty of that as he was because when I was coming out of the prison I passed through all the various gates and so forth, and then I had to be brought down to the gate where my car was, the outside gate. And one of the officers said, “Are you going down? Can you take this gentleman down to the gate?” And he said, “Sure” and on our way down I was surprised, he was an Englishman, I knew by his accent, but he was talking about his flowers and his garden and things of beauty which to me kind of in this place, well, yeah that is kind of important.

And, I’ve already said to you that when I went into the prison I was looking at these prison officers and I was making judgements about them.

Yes you said, I had noted it, tough and rough looking...

I was stereotyping. So in a way I, the student taught me something as well. He had learned about stereotyping in political terms and I thought ‘This is good, the course is doing him some good’ And yet paradoxically, I was as guilty of stereotyping as he was.