

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 D'Arcy**
Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**
Date of interview: **20/09/2018**

Important

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John D'Arcy Clip

Clip title:	The power of education
Duration:	00:02:17
Clip start point in full interview:	00:05:06
Clip end point in full interview:	00:07:23
Interview identifier:	111_T_01

Description:

John D'Arcy, National Director of The Open University in Ireland reflects on the development of the Time to think Project since 2010.

Transcript:

And it's been great to see the archive grow, because we could have stopped at many different points. We started with no resources, and we did it in a very small, incremental way because we were building trust with the interviewees, we were building trust amongst ourselves as well. And we'd great buy-in when we unveiled the project plan to then-Vice Chancellor, Martin Bean. He got it instantly, and he encouraged us. And I suppose in hindsight, would we have been ready for the Peace and Reconciliation Centre back whenever it was due to be launched? I think it's disappointing in many ways that that hasn't happened, but in a wider sense, I think we've got a much richer archive of material. We've been able to add a lot of value to it in terms of how people will be able to access it and use it. I think I hopefully, play a supportive and critical friend role to all of the people involved, but the real value in this is the superb input of Open University staff- full time staff, Associate Lecturers, the students themselves, the Prison Governors we've talked to have been very open as well about the difficulties that they had in facilitating a lot of this. But it's an amazing resource, and I think it's an unusual period of time but the thing that jumps out for me is the power of education, the power of talking, talking to people who you wouldn't normally talk to, to get a better perspective . And when I meet some of our former students in their now-daytime roles, they're doing the most fantastic work in their communities. They're trying to encourage young people to re-engage with education if they've had a poor experience, they're trying to influence policy around education, around community development. And, you know, they'll always refer back to a course text, and some of them will even reference the course text that they're using because they're now of the view that they were, I think- and I don't want to put words in anybody's mouth- but they benefitted from people helping them along the road and now they're taking that and they're cascading that within their communities.