

**The suitability of the MOOC format for teaching the principles of microhistory: a case study of “Irish Lives in War and Revolution”.**

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**Abstract:**

The MOOC, or Massive Open Online Course, is a relatively new medium for online education with particular emphasis on interactivity. MOOCs have become an increasingly popular teaching format among universities in recent years. They are widely seen to represent a revolution in the field of third-level teaching, in light of the freedom afforded to learners and the capacity for immersion in new forms of information communication. A review of relevant literature reveals an abundance of academic discussion on the feasibility of MOOCs as a form of online learning. However, little attention has been directed at the precise suitability of the MOOC format for certain subjects.

This study addresses the suitability of the MOOC format for teaching the principles of microhistory. Microhistories involve the study of small, often marginalised, social groups as a means of understanding and explaining wider trends in history. The paper uses the “Irish Lives in War and Revolution: Exploring Ireland’s History 1912-1923” MOOC, delivered by Trinity College Dublin, as a case study to examine this suitability. A personal interview was conducted with the educational staff of the MOOC, and qualitative data arising from this discussion was analysed in conjunction with material from the course, as well as an examination of learner participation statistics, discussion forums, and survey feedback. Through this analysis it was found that the MOOC format itself offers the potential to be used as a tool in teaching more inclusive and holistic perspectives on history, but an institution’s approach to using the format is ultimately the deciding factor.