**Title of the Research Project:**

**LETHE-Project: (e-)learning the invisible history of Europe**

My name is Dr Caitriona NI Cassaithe and I lecture in history education in the Institute of Education, St. Patrick’s Campus, Dublin City University. I am the lead Irish investigator for the LETHE Project. The Lethe Project is a learning platform designed to teach history to children aged 10 to 15 in Europe. The materials help students learn about social diversity by encouraging them to explore lesser-known or hidden histories. Please visit www.lethe.eu to look at the materials and activities which have been developed by experts in history education from across Europe.

We want to know about how teachers and students use the platform and gather feedback on their experiences. The surveys will focus on how easy the platform is to use and how well it helps to develop historical thinking skills. We would like to invite teachers and students to evaluate the platform and the materials for accessibility and suitability of content through online surveys. With the surveys we hope to improve these learning materials.

If teachers agree to participate, they will be required to fill out a short questionnaire and have the option to attend a short interview to discuss the project materials. Students will be asked to fill in a short online survey also.

Participation in this research is entirely by choice and teachers and students can withdraw without any penalties or any other forms of prejudice by simply letting the lead investigator know. Consent forms and information will both be handed back to them. They can also withdraw from the study in person, by telephone, or via email at any time up until the last day of data collection. If a child starts the survey and changes their mind, they can stop anytime. Please note, once they submit the survey it cannot be withdrawn as the research team will not be able to identify which survey is theirs.

There are no foreseeable risks that children or teachers, as research participants, can incur from being part of the study and all efforts will be made to protect privacy and anonymity. No personal data that can identify participants will be collected. All data collected will be stored at the University in a secure location, and held for a period of 5 years after publication of the findings, and then destroyed. Once the data collected is analysed, it will be used to adapt and improve the LETHE project materials. The team may also present the findings at conferences or in publications.

If there are queries or questions on this project, please contact the lead researcher by email at caitriona.nicassaithe@dcu.ie.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Caitríona Ní Cassaithe

Lead Investigator

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

**Plain Language Statement for Teachers**

***Dear teacher***

My name is Dr Caitriona Ni Cassaithe and I lecture in history education at Dublin City University’s Institute of Education. Myself and my colleagues are conducting a research study titled "Exploring Teacher and Student Understandings of Hidden Histories through the LETHE Project."

**What is this research about?**

This small research study aims to explore how hidden histories, stories or events that are often overlooked in traditional history education, are understood and taught in schools. We want to learn how teachers and students engage with the LETHE platform and materials and how these tools influence teaching practices and student learning.

This study is part of an Erasmus Plus initiative called the LETHE Project. The LETHE Project is an innovative digital platform that allows teachers to explore hidden histories with their students. There are 21 cases for teachers and students to explore and these (and the teaching approaches) can be found at [https://letheproject.eu/](https://protect.checkpoint.com/v2/r02/___https%3A//letheproject.eu/___.YzJlOnVsc3RlcnVuaXZlcnNpdHk6YzpvOjM0NzAwZDQ1OGUzMDhkZDJiMTVmYzcwODI0ZGVlNjY0Ojc6OWU5NjpiNzBiZjRlNjJlOTcyNDFiYWVkZDUxMTY3MmJiZmIxMDhkMzlmY2Q5MThmYTY3NTE0MWEzMjRiMGZkZGQyODNjOnA6VDpO)

**Why is this research being conducted?**

This research is being conducted so that we can evaluate the effectiveness of the LETHE platform and toolkit in improving history education. It will also allow us to understand, more fully, some of the barriers teachers face when addressing hidden histories in the classroom so that we can develop recommendations to support educators in teaching inclusive and culturally relevant histories.

**Why have you been invited to take part?**

You have been invited to participate because you are either a primary or post-primary teacher with experience of teaching history to students aged between 10-15. If you are planning to use the LETHE materials with the students in your class, your insights and feedback on the materials will be of huge help to us in understanding how the LETHE materials can support teaching hidden histories and enrich students’ learning experiences.

**What will happen if you decide to take part in this research study?**

If you agree to participate:

* You will complete a short online survey before and after engaging with the LETHE platform (approximately 15 minutes each).
* You may then choose to participate in a short, semi-structured interview (up to 30 minutes) to share your thoughts in more detail. The interviews can take place face-to-face at DCU, at your workplace or online.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can decide which parts (if any) of the study you wish to take part in.

**How will your data be used?**

The Principal Investigator for this project is Dr Caitríona Ní Cassaithe. Other team members who will access the data (once anonymised) include Dr Maria Barry and Mr Peter Whelan.The data collected will be used primarily to evaluate the LETHE platform. It will also be used to inform recommendations for history education. Your responses will be anonymised before analysis, and any identifying details will be removed to ensure confidentiality. Findings from the study may be published in academic journals or reports but individual participants will not be identifiable.

The audio recordings of each semi-structured interview will be transcribed verbatimand securely stored on a password protected google drive account through a DCU email. Audio recordings will be deleted following transcription, and anonymised data will only be shared with the named team. The deletion of the data from the DCU google drive file will occur one year after the data is collected. There will be no other copies of data stored and permanent deletion will be ensured.

*Identity of the Data Controller*- Dublin City University

*Identity of the DCU Data Protection Officer* – Mr. Martin Ward (data.protection@dcu.ie Ph.: 7005118/7008257) who will handle any data protection concerns arising from the research.

*The reason(s) for which the data will be processed or held:* Data will be stored for the period necessary for the purpose of the data to be processed.

*The categories or types of personal data to be processed*: Names of participants will be recorded on the informed consent forms; however participant data will be pseudonymised as to ensure confidentiality.

*The data’s retention period:* The deletion of the data from the DCU google drive file will occur one year after collection. This was determined under the data retention policy of DCU (2023) which states that data should only be stored for the period necessary for the purpose of the data to be processed, ie. for a period of twelve months.

*Information on the rights of the data subject:* Participants have the right to access their own personal data and can do so by contacting either the principal investigator or the contacts listed at the end of the participant information sheet.

Participants have the right to lodge a complaint concerning the use of personal data with the [*Irish Data Protection Commission*](https://protect.checkpoint.com/v2/r02/___https%3A//www.dataprotection.ie/___.YzJlOnVsc3RlcnVuaXZlcnNpdHk6YzpvOjM0NzAwZDQ1OGUzMDhkZDJiMTVmYzcwODI0ZGVlNjY0Ojc6YTkzZDo0NTM5Y2RmZTNiNGM2MjY1MmU0N2YwMjJjMzA5NTQzNGM1NzZmNmQyN2I2Mzk1ZDYwZmU0ZjMzM2RhN2UwOTA1OnA6VDpO)*.*

**How will your privacy be protected** (including any legal limits to confidentiality)?

Your privacy is important to us. To ensure this, surveys will not ask for your name, and you will be assigned an ID number by the Principal Investigator. If you participate in an interview, your responses will be anonymised during transcription and all data will be stored on encrypted systems and will only be accessible to the research team. Audio recordings of interviews will be securely stored and deleted once transcription is complete.

Please be aware that the confidentiality of information provided cannot always be guaranteed and can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

**What are the benefits of taking part in this research study?**

By taking part, you will  gain access to innovative tools and resources that may enhance your teaching practices and you will be contributing to research that seeks to improve history education and ensure it reflects Ireland’s cultural diversity.

**What are the risks of taking part in this research study?**

The risks are minimal, but you may feel uncomfortable discussing sensitive or controversial historical topics. To address this, you can skip any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

**Can you change your mind at any stage and withdraw from this study?**

Participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any stage of the data collection process without any explanation or penalty.

Please note however, that if you do not provide an email address in the online survey, then the survey data is anonymous at the point of collection and cannot be withdrawn once submitted. However, if you do provide an email address to arrange an interview, this is personal data and this means that as long as the email address is linked to the survey data, the survey data can still be withdrawn.

If you choose to withdraw from the interviews, any data already provided will be deleted up to one month after the interview. The interview data will be anonymised 1 month after participation and the data can be withdrawn up until this point.

**How will you find out what happens with this project?**

The results of the study will be shared with participants through a summary report. This report will highlight the main findings and how they are being used to improve history education in Ireland.

**Contact details for further information**

If there are queries or questions on this project, please contact the lead researcher by email at caitriona.nicassaithe@dcu.ie

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Dr Caitríona Ní Cassaithe

Lead Investigator

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9.  Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie