ISCOIL

2016 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

2016

ONLINE EDUCATION HELPS EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS GET BACK ON TRACK

Project URL: http://iscoil.ie/
Project Twitter: @iscoil

Organisations Involved iScoil http://iscoil.ie/ (@iscoil)
Department of Education and Skills
JP McManus Benevolent Fund
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Presentation Sisters

- Education
- Internet

Laura Freeman was badly bullied at school. She suffered from anxiety, which led to her leaving education before her schooling was completed. Every year, over 2,000 children like Laura leave the Irish education system, because they don't fit within the traditional infrastructure.

Thankfully, this is where iScoil comes in. Established by Marianne Checkley, iScoil is an inclusive, interactive, flexible and personalised learning system that allows students to learn in their own time to earn a QQI Level 3 Award – an equivalent of the Junior Certification in Ireland – that allows them to go on to further education.

The majority of the students are aged 13–16 and are referred to iScoil by TUSLA (Education and Welfare Services). They can log in on a computer 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and can either work from home, or in a local learning centre if that feels safer.

All students take four core modules: communications, maths, personal and interpersonal skills and computer literacy, in addition to two other modules of their choice. Each student is also assigned a mentor, and has access to a range of teachers.

"It's a very personalised programme," says Checkley. "For example, the content of the communications module can be adapted for someone who is really into cars [while] learning the skills of reading, scanning, skimming and differentiating between bias and genre."

iScoil transformed Laura's life. She finished the programme at 16, which she followed with an Open University course in psychology, and is now studying psychology at Maynooth University. "I worked hard and logged on daily. You didn't want to let your mentors down," she said.

To date, iScoil has awarded 416 QQI certificates to 321 young people, and 83% of those who completed the programme have secured a place in school, Youthreach, further education or employment. More at http://iscoil.ie

Image courtesy of amanda tipton

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