Forum presentation Oct 18th 2003.
A brief insight into the future thoughts of secondary school students in South Australia: Part 2.

This longitudinal study of secondary students has collected data that reveal some of the thoughts about the future, expressed in the responses to a series of self-report survey questionnaires given to year 10 students in a range of schools from city, country, State, Catholic and Independent schools. The most recent survey took place in the same schools and collected data from the same students but during their final year of high school. The written data collected from students across three years can now be used to examine how students' thoughts and opinions changed over time.

One of the features of this survey conducted via the Internet through a series of interactive web pages was the nature of students' inner expectations, hopes and fears. The students were told that no one they knew would ever have access to their answers and responses. They saw that the electronic transfer of data ensured anonymity thus encouraging free expression and probably truthful statements to be made without fear of comments or actions from others. This electronically coded data came to the researcher's computer via the Internet and some of the data collected will be presented during the Divisional Research Forum. Early data analysis shows that future careers rate highly in most students' future thoughts. The support base upon which all students rely is provided by both parents and teachers.

The research topic.

Data were collected from students in a range of schools:

State schools
Independent schools
Co-educational
Boys schools
Girls schools
Country schools
City schools

Specific information was collected on:

Students' future thoughts
Future hopes
Future expectations
Future fears and worries

Self-esteem
Optimism/pessimism
School persistence
Views about intelligence
The influences of parents, teachers, adults and friends on their school performance.

Interactive web pages were accessed by students in schools. Their responses to the questions asked were sent to the university via the Internet.

Encouragement from parents during year 12.

Students were asked to describe the kinds of support they received from their parents during their final year of high school. The data were analysed according to the following criteria…

(1). Parents.

Specific, encouragement and/or support likely to promote better performance at school.	5
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*With* threats or sanctions or pressure)	4
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*Without* threats or sanctions or pressure)	3
Perceived neutral influence, no specific support or encouragement.	2
Perceived discouragement that may hinder school performance. Threats may be made.	1
No written response in text box provided or an unrelated or inappropriate response.	0

P_ENCOUR

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	4	3.4
	1	5	4.2
	2	9	7.6
	3	94	79.7
	4	5	4.2
	5	1	.8
	Total	118	100.0

P_ENCOUR
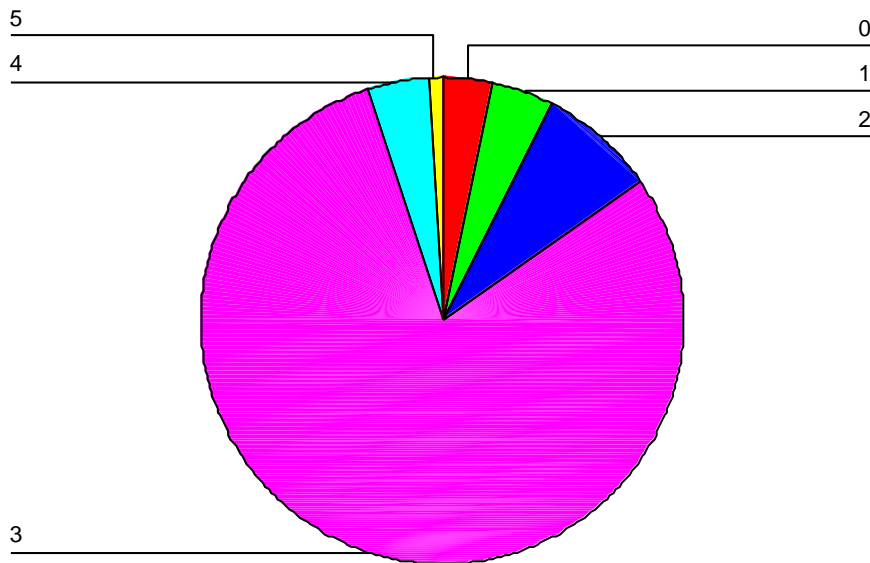
Examples of comments.

they will do anything for me in order for me to achieve the best in can in year 12. they brought me a new computer

They always encourage me to do my best, and never give up. They tell me that most things take time, and that if i dont get the hang of something right away, dont run away, just get used to it.

My mother and father although they are divorced both actively take part in any school topics I bring up. My mother understands my hatred for scholl but helps me to just see that there is only a little while longer. My dad is a sweetie and he always listens to my problems and gives me positive views about myself to look forward too

they yell at me when i do things wrong!! they punish me also. they let me see the bad side of things

Encouragement from adults during year 12.

Students were asked to describe the kinds of support they received from other adults during their final year of high school. The data were analysed according to the following criteria…

**(2). Other adults.**

Specific, encouragement and/or support likely to promote better performance at school.	**5**
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*With* threats or sanctions or pressure)	**4**
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*Without* threats or sanctions or pressure)	**3**
Perceived neutral influence, no specific support or encouragement.	**2**
Perceived discouragement that may hinder school performance. Threats may be made.	**1**
No written response in text box provided or an unrelated or inappropriate response.	**0**

A_ENCOUR

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	21	17.8
	2	8	6.8
	3	89	75.4
	Total	118	100.0

A_ENCOUR
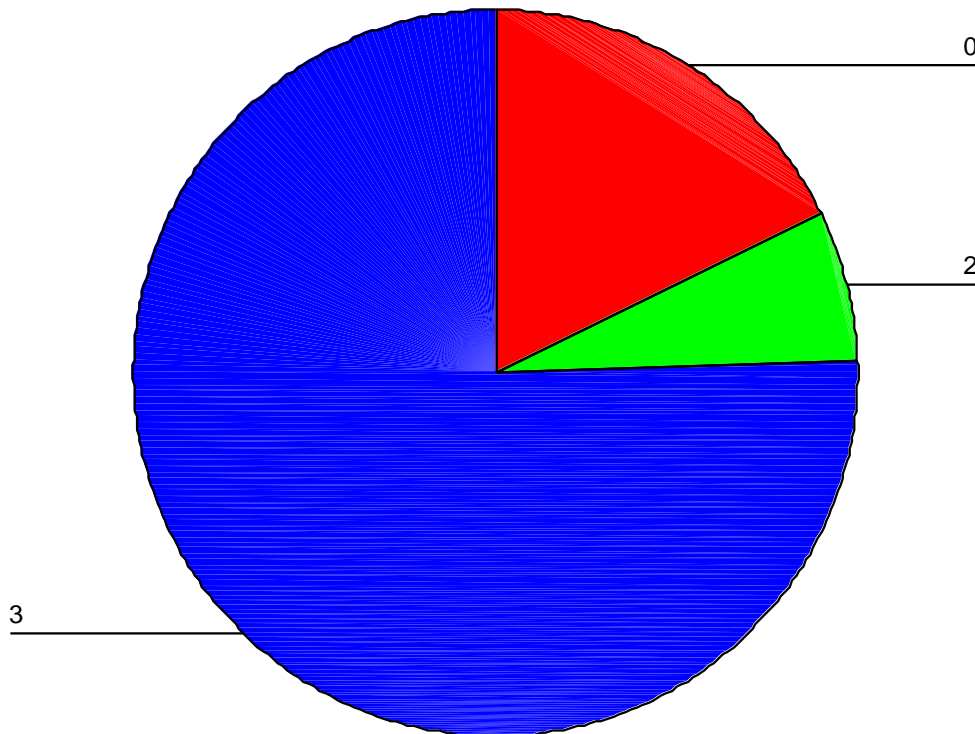
Examples of comments.

Most adults such as my other family members are very supportive and are very encouraging

they try and find ways of getting better education for me(tutors, camps, learning places etc)
read articles and call people for me

My sisters they show me alot of love and assure me that I am worth more then what I think. They have all finished sholl and thus are always readyt and willing to assist me in my work and in anything I do

They also expect me to do well, but i feel that they are invading into my life when they ask about my grades first rather than how i am doing. i feel they are more concerned about how smart i am rather that how i am

Encouragement from teachers during year 12.

Students were asked to describe the kinds of support they received from their teachers during their final year of high school. The data were analysed according to the following criteria…

(3). Teachers.

Specific, encouragement and/or support likely to promote better performance at school.	5
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*With* threats or sanctions or pressure)	4
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*Without* threats or sanctions or pressure)	3
Perceived neutral influence, no specific support or encouragement.	2
Perceived discouragement that may hinder school performance. Threats may be made.	1
No written response in text box provided or an unrelated or inappropriate response.	0

T_ENCOUR

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	10	8.5
	1	6	5.1
	2	8	6.8
	3	81	68.6
	5	13	11.0
	Total	118	100.0

T_ENCOUR

5

0

1

2

3
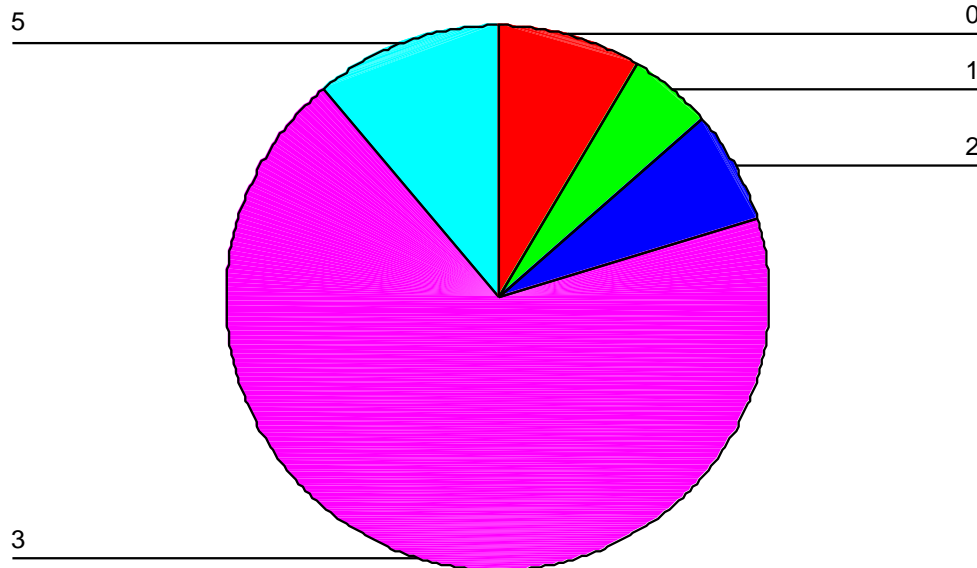
Examples of comments.

some have a genuine concern about my future because they offer extra help
-telling me that I am smart enough to succeed

They try to support you by helping you choose subjects and helping you get on your feet but, some teachers dont do it the right way!!

They don't they're annoying

Teachers are wonderful with all the support they give me especially if there are things I dont understand or are not good at. They provide me with extra lessons if needed and are always willing to answer any questions I may have. They are willing to spend extra time with me to ensure that I can do the best I possibly can.

Encouragement from friends during year 12.

Students were asked to describe the kinds of support they received from their school friends during their final year of high school. The data were analysed according to the following criteria…
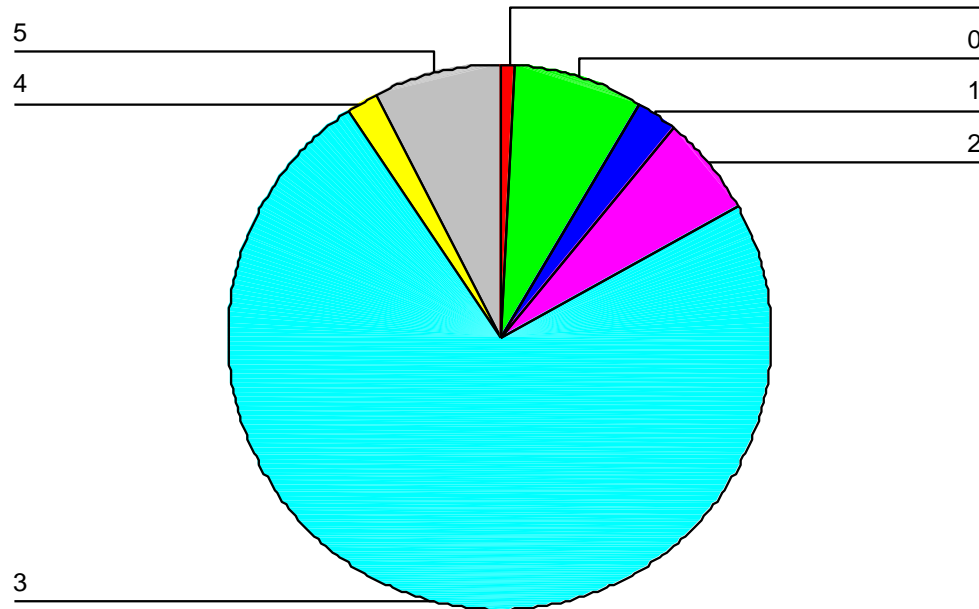
(4). School friends.

Specific, encouragement and/or support likely to promote better performance at school.	5
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*With* threats or sanctions or pressure)	4
General encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better performance at school. (*Without* threats or sanctions or pressure)	3
Perceived neutral influence, no specific support or encouragement.	2
Perceived discouragement that may hinder school performance. Threats may be made.	1
No written response in text box provided or an unrelated or inappropriate response.	0

F_ENCOUR

		Frequency	Percent
Valid		1	.8
	0	9	7.6
	1	3	2.5
	2	7	5.9
	3	87	73.7
	4	2	1.7
	5	9	7.6
	Total	118	100.0

F_ENCOUR

Examples of comments.

My school friends are great because they are always there regardless of the test score you just received or whether they do any better than you. It's not about competition and friends are always willing to help you out whether its an extra study session or just a relaxing night out, the support they give is terrific and it is extremely hard to do it without them.

They give me assistance on how i should do my work and the way i should do it

If a big weekend is planned and i have to cancel due to a test they do not pester me to come as they too, have their priorities right, and you never know it could be them the next week.

they dont they put everyone down

Personal encouragement during year 12.

Students were asked to describe the kinds of things they said to themselves or the actions they took to encourage themselves during the final year of high school. The data were analysed according to the following criteria…

(5). Yourself.   s_encour

Specific, encouragement and support likely to promote better school performance.	4
General personal encouragement, non-specific, likely to promote better school performance. Personal exhortation.	3
No specific support or encouragement generated from within.	2
Discouraging self-talk likely to hinder school performance.	1
No written response in text box provided.	0

S_ENCOUR

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	8	6.8
	1	5	4.2
	2	13	11.0
	3	86	72.9
	4	6	5.1
	Total	118	100.0

S_ENCOUR
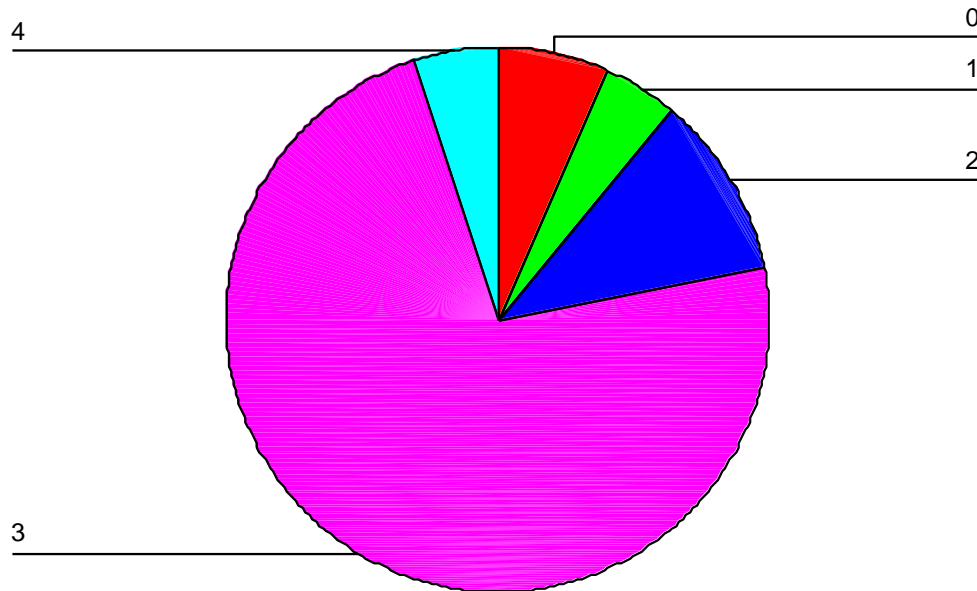
Examples of comments.

I motivate myself by telling myself I'm the one in control, and nothing can stop me doing what I want to do if I put my mind to it, and my grades and my current achievements reflect that.

i dont want to do well at school particularly. I encourage myself to learn to the point of obsession

constant encouragement, self talk, try and keep up beat about how i am doing, look for a good side to each result, maintain high standards so that i dont become complacent

*Just tell myself to be motivated but I struggle to be motivated*

Because i enjoy honest learning. Except maths - thats just rubbish. But my arts subjects + InfoTech (computers are good) and Physics (science is good) are encouraging. I also encourage myself with rewards in the form of food and dog biscuits.

Students' goals for the future.

Students generally look to the future with optimism and hope. This chart shows the general directions of their thoughts from a year 12 perspective.

E_DOMAIN

		Frequency	Percent
Valid		2	1.5
	0	3	2.3
	1	16	12.0
	2	9	6.8
	4	15	11.3
	5	84	63.2
	6	4	3.0
	Total	133	100.0
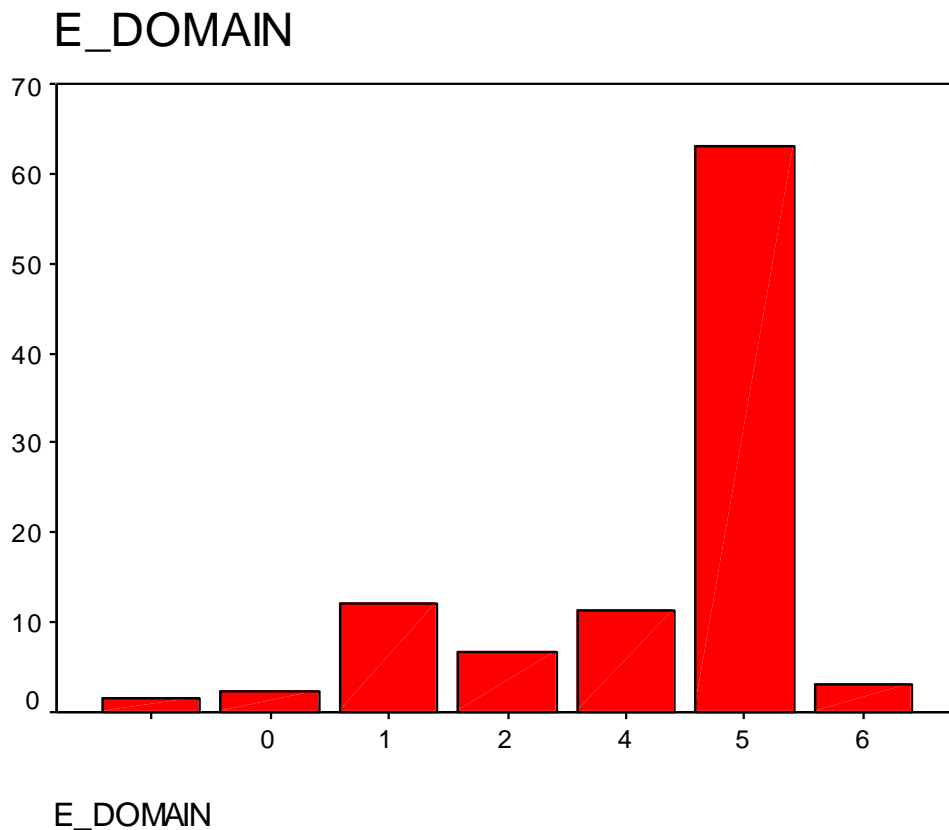
E_DOMAIN

E_DOMAIN

Possible Self listings – Domain Area of the Dominant Future Self (The most important self).

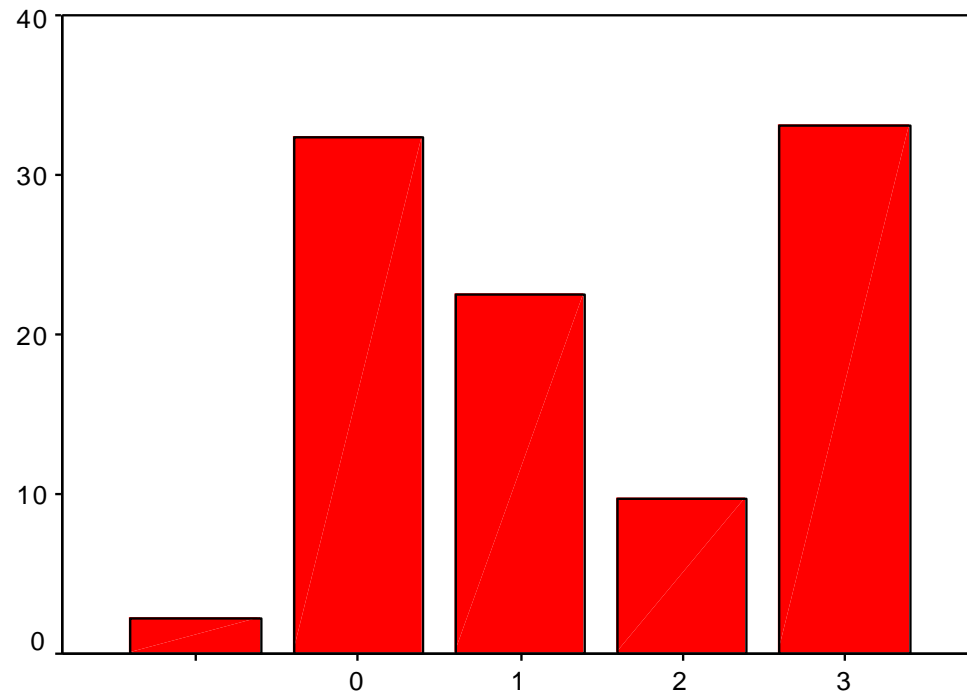| Expected Selves		Hoped-for Selves		Feared Selves	
Unclassifiable	6	Unclassifiable	6	Unclassifiable	6
Vocational/career goals. (Including financial security and university study.)	5	Vocational/career goals. (Including financial security and university study.)	5	Vocational or career goals and/or financial security. (Including unemployment – being poor).	5
Social/family goals. (Including stability of relationships. Marriage. Parenting.)	4	Social/family goals. (Including stability of relationships. Marriage. Parenting. Home ownership. Love.)	4	Social/family goals. (Including stability of relationships and anti-social behavior - homelessness).	4
Health related goals.	3	Health related goals. Longevity.	3	Health related goals. (Including fears of death, injury or declining health of self or near person. Fear of growing old.)	3
Personal development goals. (Including travel, public service, athletic/sporting & recognition. Success in some arena.)	2	Personal development goals. (Including travel, public service, athletic/sporting & recognition. Personal competence & success. Fame. Altruism.	2	Personal development goals. (Including failure to perform in an area of perceived importance. Religious beliefs.)	2
General happiness.	1	General happiness. Enjoyment of life. Comfortable life. Security and acceptance.	1	General unhappiness. (Including loneliness. Lack of friends.)	1
No clear expectations or no response.	0	No clear hopes or no response.	0	No feared future situations indicated or no response.	0

Level of aspirations.

What do students, who see a vocation as their most important thought, aspire to?

Vocational and Career Future Selves.		Required Effort.	

Expected Selves		Hoped-for Selves	
High level of study/training required – Diploma, degree or higher degree required.	3	High level of study/training required – Diploma, degree or higher degree required.	3
Medium level of study/training required – TAFE diploma, certificate or apprenticeship.	2	Medium level of study/training required – TAFE diploma, certificate or apprenticeship.	2
Unspecified level of study/training required – On the job training, own initiative.	1	Unspecified level of study/training required – On the job training, own initiative.	1
No stated selves or non-vocational/career responses made.	0	No stated selves or non-vocational/career responses made.	0

E_ASPIRE

		Frequency	Percent
Valid		3	2.3
	0	43	32.3
	1	30	22.6
	2	13	9.8
	3	44	33.1
	Total	133	100.0

E_ASPIRE

E_ASPIRE

End.