More than a Room for Reading

JCSP Demonstration Library Project

Contents

1.0 Introduction

During the past 25 years research has been conducted internationally endeavouring to identify and measure the impact that school libraries have on the development of children's reading skills and their educational outcomes. The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (IFLA, 2000) sets forth that there is a meaningful relationship between the school library and learning. It states that the provision of information is "fundamental to functioning successfully in today's society which is increasingly information and knowledge based" and that there is an established body of evidence that demonstrates that "students achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem-solving and information and communication technology skills" when teachers and school librarians work co-operatively.

1.1 International Quantitative Research Studies

A number of studies have been undertaken to measure the role of the school library with respect to students' development of reading skills, subject-related knowledge, and information literacy. Since 1993, Keith Lance has conducted an extensive range of studies based in different geographical regions in the United States. These have used quantitative, statistical data to determine the impact of school libraries on the academic attainment of primary and second-level students. His most recent investigation, The Illinois Study (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton-Pennell, 2005), confirms findings from previous studies that factors that have a significant effect on students' test performance include the librarian's work with regard to inter-staff collaboration and the development of technology; the quality of staffing and stock collection; and students' usage of the library and its collection including all print and electronic resources.

Additionally, Lance and other researchers who have adopted his quantitative model (Baughman, 2000; Baxter & Smalley, 2003; Burgin & Brown Bracy, 2003; Callison, 2004; Hall-Ellis & Berry, 1995; Rodney, Lance & Hamilton-Pennell, 2003; Smith, 2001) have demonstrated that students' test scores are also influenced by the size and range of the school library collection as well as the librarian's active engagement in the role of instructor or educator. Lance's studies also found that students who attended schools with well-funded school libraries achieved on average higher test results regardless of the socio-economic environment in which their schools were located. This finding was supported by a subsequent study of school libraries in Texas (Smith, 2001), that adopted a similar quantitative methodology to measure the impact of school libraries on student's academic achievement. Surveying 600 school libraries, across primary and second-level schools, this study found that students' who attended schools that employed a professional school librarian achieved better academic results than those who were enrolled in schools without a librarian. The Texas Study argues that while socio-economic factors are the most significant determinant of academic achievement, the characteristics of the school library "may account for up to 8 per cent of the variance in reading-related test scores" (Smith, 2001). One conclusion reached from the Texas Study is that "libraries play a very special role in providing enrichment to students from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing additional help to develop skills to succeed" (Williams, Wavell & Coles, 2001, p. 11).

1.2 Qualitative International Research

While Lance's quantitative model has provided statistical evidence that school libraries do have an impact on students' academic attainment, there has been an emergent body of research that is based on the view that quantitative assessment of test score results alone is not a sufficient measure of the impact of school libraries on students' educational progress (Vallender, 2000). Todd (2002) describing the development of qualitative research in the study of the impact of school libraries on students' educational attainment defines these studies as on a smaller scale, but complementary to statistical evaluations and states:

The micro-research examines more closely the myriad dimensions of the complex relationship between student learning and engagement with and use of a variety of information sources and formats in the information environment, particularly in the context of specific curriculums (…) These studies, available

across a wide range of age groups, curriculum settings and students' information seeking and use, as well as the processes and benefits of integrating information learning outcomes in relation to the instructional interventions of school librarian-teacher collaborations. They tend to be small scale, local, and employ a range of methodologies such as case studies, action research, survey questionnaires, interviews, quasi experiments, observational approaches, process tracking, document analysis, and group comparisons (p.3).

The findings of this developing body of qualitative and methodologically triangulated research investigations (Callision, 2001; Haslett, 2005; Haycock, 1995; Loertscher & Wools, 2002; Oberg, 2001; Streatfield & Markless, 1994; Williams & Wavell, 2001) have demonstrated the importance of evaluating students' use of information and the library with respect not only to standardised test results but also to how students are provided with opportunities to develop a range of skills and how the library impacts on students' learning attitudes. Included within this is the important role of the school library in promoting reading (Elley, 1991; Foertsch, 1992; Krashen, 1993, 2001; Lipscomb, 1993; McQuillan, 1997). Williams and Wavell (2001), through a case study approach, found that reading interventions by the school librarian had a short-term effect on the attitudes of students who were characterised as reluctant readers. Their study concluded that a longitudinal investigation would be necessary to fortify their initial findings.

1.3 School Libraries and Students' Holistic Development

Coinciding with the evolution of qualitative or triangulated methodologies to evaluate the role of the school library on students' academic attainment, is the focus that researchers in the field have begun to give to identifying and measuring the impact of the school library on students' holistic development. The latter would encompass elements such as self-esteem, confidence, motivation, independence, social skills, and "future-time perspectives" (Blinn & Pike, 1989). Williams and Wavell (2001) found that because the library is perceived by students as less constraining than the classroom, the school librarian has the ability to help students to develop their curricular-based as well as holistic potential. In their review of school library research, Williams, Wavell and Coles (2001) cite a range of studies that have shown the potential role that school libraries can play in contributing to students' holistic development. They support their argument with the following example:

A study, reported by Hopkins (1989) investigated the role of the library in promoting "positive self-concepts" in children, which are defined as the individual's perception of their self-worth and abilities. The observational case study approach used in the research was conducted in three primary level libraries. In particular the library can impact positively on pupils' self-concepts through the factors of: cooperation, independence, success, challenge, feeling of value and creating a positive atmosphere. The results showed that the library has the potential to play an enhancing role in developing students' positive self-concepts and thus help them achieve academically (p.18).

The authors conclude that while there has been some innovative research in assessing the school library's potential in affecting students' attitudes to learning, there is not a substantial body of evidence, particularly with regard to students who would be characterised as "disadvantaged" (p.20) for a variety of reasons.

1.4 School Library Research in Ireland

In Ireland research on school libraries is in its early stages (Coghlan et al, 1999; Haslett, 2002, 2005). To a great extent this is because of the inconsistent and somewhat sparse provision of school library resources throughout the country across all levels of education. The importance of providing all children in Ireland with access to library resources is emphasised in both An Chomhairle Leabharleanna's report *Joining Forces: Delivering Libraries and Information Services in the Information Age* (1999) and in the Department of the Environment and Local Government's document *Branching Out: A New Public Library Service* (1998).

The Library Association of Ireland has recommended that it should be legislated that schools be provided with libraries (2000). In *The School Library in the 21st Century: an Agenda for Change (2004), the School Library Association Republic of Ireland (SLARI)*, in describing the importance of a nationwide school libraries system, makes the following points:

The situation at second-level where no Schools Library Service exists is most unsatisfactory (…) Today's second-level students need the support which can be offered by an effective and dynamic school library to help them with all aspects of their development and in particular with the development of independent learning and research skills. The demands of today's post-primary school curriculum are such that each post-primary school would require a substantial annual budget in order to fulfil its role as a central information resource, (…) every pupil in this country is entitled to receive this high quality service…

Despite the extensive quantitative and to a lesser degree, qualitative, research internationally that has made the case that a well resourced school library with a professionally qualified librarian has a significant impact on students' reading skills and educational outcomes, few second-level schools in Ireland have the kind of school library services as described in SLARI's recent policy statement.

1.5 The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) Demonstration Library Project
Indicated through a range of pilot projects from 1979, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) has operated since 1996 on a national level. It is an intervention at the junior cycle for students who, for a variety of reasons, have experienced difficulties in school and hence are considered to be at risk of leaving school early. The programme is founded on the premise that all children can be successful in school and it strives to help teachers to provide opportunities for students' achievements and skills to be documented and acknowledged.

Fundamental to the JCSP are the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The JCSP Support Service works with schools to employ classroom strategies to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills and to encourage the adoption of a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy. This is facilitated by providing schools with ongoing in-service on cross-curricular approaches to literacy and numeracy as well as the provision of resources annually to run a variety of short-term and long-term interventions that can impact on students' educational, cultural, and social development. The programme is dedicated to ensuring that all young people, regardless of their socio-economic context or educational difficulties, are provided with the opportunities in the junior cycle to develop fully their skills and potential.

In working closely with schools that have been identified as serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities, the JCSP Support Service identified that the provision of library resources within these schools was generally poor. In October 2001, in response to a proposal submitted the JCSP Support Service, the Minister for Education and Science provided funding for the pilot JCSP Demonstration Library Project as part of the Early Literacy Initiative. The project endeavoured to explore the impact of high quality school libraries staffed with full-time professional librarians on JCSP students' reading skills, attitudes, and overall learning experience in the junior cycle. To this end, in 2002 fully resourced school libraries were established in ten JCSP schools throughout the country, with an additional library created in September 2003. All of the libraries were, and continue to be, run by professionally qualified, experienced librarians. Under the recent *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)* (2005), the Department of Education and Science sanctioned the creation of additional JCSP libraries in schools to bring the Library Project to a total of up to 50 libraries. The first ten of these new libraries have been operational in schools since September 2007.

Because the Library Project's rationale was to explore how JCSP students' learning experience is affected by having access to books and reading resources in a structured environment, research has been an integral component of the project from the outset. The research is multifaceted and is comprised of student questionnaires, standardised reading tests, documentation of monthly book and resource

borrowing rates, monthly records of librarian contact time with staff, submission of timetables of students' library classes and use, as well as monthly and annual reports from librarians describing the range of library activities and evidence of the impact of these activities on JCSP students' learning experiences.

During the first phase, the JCSP Support Service commissioned Dr Deirdre Haslett to evaluate the library project from November 2002 to December 2004. The aim of the research was

> … to establish whether a good library, which caters for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, actually impacts on their learning experience and allows them to address and overcome literacy difficulties (Haslett, 2005, p. 25)

Employing a range of quantitative and qualitative methods to gain sufficient data to accurately evaluate the impact of the libraries on JCSP students, Haslett assessed a number of factors including in-service training and support for teachers and librarians; the operation of literacy initiatives within the libraries; cross-curricular work in the libraries; standardised reading test results; resource borrowing as well as the impressions of teachers, principals, and the students themselves. The findings of this two year study, presented in the report *Room for Reading* (2005), can be summarised as follows:

> … the findings demonstrate over and over again, that well stocked, well managed school libraries, with access to books through structured library programmes that are directed towards the learning needs and interests of even the most reluctant and hesitant readers, can have impacts that are very significant (2005, p. 131).

Amongst her recommendations for the future of the JCSP Library Project, Haslett argues that it is necessary for the long-term effectiveness and viability of the libraries that documentation, evaluation and research be on-going. The role of research will become increasingly essential as the project continues to expand.

2.0 Background to JCSP Graduates Research Project 2007

In Autumn 2006 a full-time researcher was appointed to the JCSP Support Service. The researcher introduced a longitudinal element into the research being undertaken in the library schools in order to contribute to the evolution of the project, build upon the positive inroads the libraries had made in terms of enhancing the learning experiences of students and to identify areas that could be developed in order to sustain, support, and embellish the work that was being done by the JCSP school librarians. As part of this long-term research framework, it was agreed amongst the members of the JCSP Support Service, that a valuable addition to Haslett's research findings would be to track the subsequent progress of the JCSP students who participated in that study, some of whom would, it was hoped, still be enrolled in their schools as senior cycle students.

2.1 Research Question and Variables
As the first stage in the development of this research study, the following research question and measurement variables were devised. These subsequently informed the methodological approach undertaken for the project:

Research Question: Does a professionally staffed school library have a longitudinal impact on the educational aspirations, experiences, and outcomes of adolescent students who attend schools that are located in "disadvantaged" communities?

Measurement Variables: a) individual students' aspirations, hopes, future plans, self-efficacy, and self-esteem

b) individual students' experiences (related to presence of library) throughout their school years (including academic, cultural, social and emotional experiences)

c) individual students' educational outcomes including reading skills, Junior Certificate results, school assessments, progress in senior cycle.

2.2 Research Design and Method

Traditionally, in a variety of disciplines, young people have been allocated a voiceless role in research. There was a view that rather than being participants, young people were the objects of research studies. Of late, researchers are beginning to adopt a more youth oriented approach to their studies, emphasising the importance of young people's rights in the research process from initiation to recommendations. Of late, questions have been raised about the purpose of young people's studies, e.g., are we conducting research about young people, or are we conducting research for young people (Maunther, 1997)? Increasingly, researchers have recognised the need to develop collaborative and respectful methodologies in working with young people of all ages. These methodologies should strive to place the young person in the centre of the research process, accord respect to the young person's perspective, listen to the voice of the young person, and, optimally, empower the young person to participate in deciding what the aims of the research should be. As with all marginalised groups, this kind of emancipatory and participatory approach would help researchers to determine whether their efforts truly are serving those intended. In developing a methodological approach for this study, an emphasis was placed on enabling students in the library schools to contribute their views and voices to the investigation.

In constructing a methodological framework for the study, a multiple case study approach, based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), was selected. Research in the fields of psychology and education has made extensive use of the case study strategy. In selecting the case study as a method, the researcher opts to study a phenomenon in detail, by focusing on one particular instance, as opposed to a wide range of examples as used in survey research. By focusing on the individual case, it is possible to explore in depth, the intricate network of factors, which work together to determine the nature of the phenomenon being studied. Conducted in the cases natural setting, without the imposition of artificial controls, this approach enables a researcher to analyse phenomena as they occur. The aim is to present a richly detailed report of the intricate web of factors, e.g., policies, relationships, personalities, and events that contribute to the specific phenomenon under investigation.

While the dominant methodological approach was that of naturalistic enquiry, a range of different methods, (or triangulation), was used to generate data. Increasingly social science researchers recognise the compatibility of qualitative and quantitative methods (Berkowitz, 1996, p. 69). Combining methods can compensate for the possible limitations of a single approach.

Informed by the range of quantitative and qualitative international studies of the school library's impact on educational outcomes and learning experiences, the researcher selected a triangulated methodological approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research instruments in order to resolve the research question. By employing methodological triangulation the researcher aimed to address the limitations of single methods, extend the scope and depth of the findings, as well as to contribute to the scientific rigor of the study.

Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in form. However, the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to an investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 4).

Triangulation allows a researcher not only to test the validity of emerging themes, but also contributes to the construction of a multi-faceted, in-depth understanding of the case under study.

2.2.1 Procedure
In order to resolve the research question it was decided that nine of the original JCSP library schools would be asked to participate in the research study.

Once the library schools had been identified the research procedure was divided into three phases.

2.2.1.1 Phase One
In preparation for the first phase of the research project, letters of information (Appendix A) were sent to the principals and JCSP co-ordinators of the nine library schools in order to explain the purpose of the research and to obtain their consent. The letter indicated that all research instruments could be viewed by principals prior to the data collection and that the researcher would provide information letters and consent forms for parents. The procedure for data collection in Phase One was comprised of two stages:

(i) In order to gain a quantitative measure of Variable C (2.1), and drawing upon Haslett's foundation research, the nine participating library schools were asked to administer Group Reading Test (6-14) Nfer Nelson to the JCSP graduates who were, at the time of the study, currently enrolled in the schools. The intention was to establish, through the tracking and comparison of standardised reading test results derived in the period of the earlier research 2002-2004, with those scores achieved this year, whether students' reading skills had developed through their long-term engagement with the school libraries. Across the nine participating library schools 227 students participated in Phase One of the research study.

(ii) Additionally, in the interest of providing an opportunity to enable students to contribute meaningfully to the findings of the research project, a questionnaire (Appendix B) was developed to provide for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Students were requested to complete the questionnaire after completion of their standardised reading tests. As a means to measure variables A and C (2.1) the questionnaire was designed to explore JCSP graduates' experiences of, and, attitudes towards school; their past and present use of the school library; their reading characteristics; their impressions of the Junior Certificate and their assessment of their Junior Certificate exam results; their assessment of their present course of study and their plans or aspirations for the future. The library schools returned 226 completed student questionnaires.

Phase One of the research project was completed in April 2007.

2.2.1.2 Phase Two
For the in-depth, qualitative element of the research project, the researcher decided to concentrate the data collection in three of the nine participating library schools. These three library schools were asked to participate in Phase Two and Phase Three of the data collection primarily because each had experienced a consistent level of library service since the initiation of the JCSP Demonstration Project in 2002. Two of the schools selected retained, at the time of the study, their original librarians, while the other school had only recently, welcomed a new librarian. The latter individual, however, had worked as a librarian for the project consistently since 2003. Therefore it was deemed that each of these three schools, and the JCSP students enrolled therein, had enjoyed a continuity of library service since 2002 and, therefore, would be in the best position to provide meaningful data concerning the long-term impact of the school library on JCSP students.

As with Phase One, detailed, formal letters of information and consent forms (Appendices C and D), explaining the general nature and timescale of the proposed data collection, were sent to the principals,

JCSP co-ordinators, and the librarians in each of the three schools. The letters invited these nine individuals to contribute to the study, by taking part in an interview with the researcher at their school at a time convenient for them. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. In drafting the interview schedules (Appendix E) for the adult participants, questions were constructed to provide specific, focused answers, as well as more open-ended questions that would allow participants to elaborate in their own words, drawing upon their experiences and individual areas of expertise.

The interview schedules were designed as "open-ended instrument[s] used to help direct the dialogue" (Berkoitz, 1996, p. 61) and provided participants with the freedom to contribute fresh insights while ensuring that each responded to questions constructed to resolve the research question through the measurement of Variables A, B and C. The interview schedules were designed to gain the adults' perspectives on the impact of the libraries on students' educational outcomes, retention rates into the senior cycle, aspirations for the future, as well as how each individual would envisage the future development of their school library. From the nature of the interview schedules, it was anticipated that each interview would require forty-five minutes to an hour. Interviews were held at the three schools during March and April 2007. All of the interviews with the adult participants were audio-recorded and transcribed. Print copies of interview transcriptions were sent by post to each of the adult participants in order for each to verify, add to, or edit the contents of their interview document. Four of the nine adult participants returned their documents with minor amendments.

2.2.1.3 Phase Three
The final phase of the data collection was comprised of focus group work with JCSP graduates in the three library schools who were, at the time of the study, enrolled in the senior cycle. All of these students had access to the JCSP library service since the start of their second-level education. In preparation for the final stage of the data collection the researcher organised with each of the librarians a day during which students could meet with the researcher in their school libraries. The agenda for these meetings included explaining to students the purpose of the research, the nature of the work that would be done in the focus group, and a thorough review of anonymity, confidentiality and other ethical considerations with respect to participation in a research study. An information leaflet was prepared for students including a written form to obtain their consent to participate. This was given to students during the meetings. Those students who gave the researcher their informed, signed consent, were subsequently given letters of information and consent forms (Appendices F and G) to take home for their parents or guardians to sign and return to the researcher. All students who participated in Phase Three of the project provided the researcher with both their own, and their parent/guardian's informed consent. Introduction meetings were held with the participating students in February 2007. A total of 19 students participated in Phase Three of the research project.

During March and April 2007 the focus group work with the students was conducted in their respective school libraries. The work was comprised of two activities that included students constructing individual concept maps on the theme of "My Future", as well as the completion of personal timelines (Appendix H) reflecting their positive and negative experiences of their second-level education as well as their ideas and aspirations for the future. These activities were developed in order to measure variables A and B.

Working in small groups in the school libraries, the focus group work started with an informal discussion between the researcher and students about concept maps. In each case, the researcher began by constructing with the group a concept map along a range of different themes (for example, "holidays", "library", "sports", etc) in order to give them a sense of how one could approach the activity. This introduction served to create a relaxed environment and allowed the researcher to establish a rapport with the students. Once students agreed that they understood the nature of the concept - mapping activity, each was provided with a sheet of A2 paper as well as an assortment of coloured felt-tip markers, crayons, and coloured pencils. Students were also offered a selection of clippings from newspapers and magazines should they prefer to introduce collage to their concept maps. The students were asked to begin their concept maps by writing "My Future" in a central location. The researcher then assumed a

non-participatory role while the students constructed the maps of their futures. The mapping activity ranged in duration for students from approximately 5 to 15 minutes. Once the maps were completed the researcher spent time with individual students asking them to describe their maps. These informal interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of each student participant.

The focus group work was concluded with the distribution to each participant of a timeline template to capture their views on their past, present, and future (Appendix H) Timelines were completed by all students and returned to the researcher.

3.0 Findings

As indicated in Section 2.1 of this report, data collection was initiated in February 2007 with all three phases completed by the end of April 2007. As each of the research instruments employed was unique, different methods were used for data analysis to account for the specific nature of each. The following sections will present for each research instrument both the analytical methods employed as well as the findings from the data collected.

3.1 Phase One: Group Reading Tests

Since the initiation of the *Room for Reading* research, JCSP students in the library schools have their reading skills assessed using the Group Reading Test (6-14) Nfer Nelson. While it is acknowledged that there are limitations to this particular reading test, it has been used to triangulate the more anecdotal and qualitative evidence of students' reading development documented by librarians, school staffs, parents, and the students themselves. Across the nine participating library schools in this research project, 227 Group Reading Tests (Test X) were completed by JCSP graduates, enrolled in senior cycle at the time of this study. The tests were returned by the librarians to the researcher and were subsequently delivered to an individual who, at the time of the study, was not associated with the JCSP Library Project, for marking. Results were sent to the researcher who forwarded copies of the students' results to the JCSP co-ordinators at the participating schools.

In order to analyse and draw conclusions from the standardised test data, it was necessary to locate reading test results from the *Room for Reading* study. Print documents of the latter as well as limited electronic documentation were identified and a comparison of records was initiated in order to determine which of the 227 students could be identified in the *Room for Reading* cohorts. Through this analysis it was possible to identify comparative reading test results for 127 of the students. Tables 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of the comparison in reading test results for those students who participated in the *Room for Reading* study and the current research.

Table 1: Summary of Increases, Maintenance and Decreases in Reading Ages.

Students Tested (Comparative)	127	Percentages
Students whose reading ages increased	118	93%
Students who maintained the same reading age	4	3%
Students whose reading ages decreased	5	4%

Table 2: Levels of Reading Age Increases in Improving Readers

Level of increase (in years/months)	Number	Percentage
0.01 to 1.06	48	41%
1.07 to 3.06	45	38%
More than 3.06	25	21%
Total who increased	118	100%

It is recognised that standardised reading tests such as the Group Reading Test do not offer educators the most sensitive instrument to monitor students' reading skills development. The tests are not designed to provide diagnostic information and are intended as a short screening test. However the standardised test format can provide a broad measure and highlight general trends across a cohort of students. It is clear from the results of the tests taken by students participating in this research project that nearly all of those who were also tested for the *Room for Reading* study have improved their reading skills through the course of their studies in the JCSP Library Schools. Additionally of these 93%, nearly two-thirds (N=70) made substantial improvement.

3.2 Phase One: Student Questionnaire

The student questionnaire was designed in order to enable students in the nine library schools to provide their opinions about the library, their studies in school, their reading patterns, as well as their aspirations for the future. The questionnaire was developed using a range of multiple choice questions as well as open questions that would encourage more qualitative responses. Because of this dualistic format, the data from the returned questionnaires was separated into quantitative and qualitative categories for coding and analysis.

3.2.1 Student Questionnaire: Quantitative Data

Quantitative data from the student questionnaires was entered into SPSS vol 14, coded according to the thematic content of the data and response categories. Frequency analyses were conducted for all variables on the overall data set, and then re-tested on individual library schools' submitted data. Reports of the latter tests were subsequently provided to each of the participating library schools.

Of all returned student questionnaires, 47.8% (N=108) were completed by females and 52.2% (N=118) by male students, thus response rates from both gender groups would be sufficiently balanced. In terms of returns by year grouping the figures are less evenly distributed with 44.7% (N=101) from students enrolled in 5th Year, compared to 37.6% (N=85) from 6th Year students and 17.7% (N=40) from 4th Year students. The lower number in the latter could reflect either the absence of a Transition Year in some of the participating schools or JCSP graduates proceeding directly from the Junior Certificate into 5th Year. Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 along with Diagrams 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 provide a breakdown of responses to specific questions that make up the overall thematic categories of the questionnaire.

Table 3: Reading Attitudes and Patterns

3. "I like reading…"	Frequency	Percent
A lot	38	16.8%
A Little	140	62%
Not at All	48	21.2%
Total	226	100%

4. "I like to read…"		
Everyday	21	9.3%
Every Week	34	15.0%
Every Month	2	0.9%
Sometimes	145	64.2%
Never	24	10.6%
Total	226	100%

5. "My reading is…"		
Excellent	**28**	**12.4%**
Good	**113**	**50.0%**
Okay	**63**	**27.9%**
Could be better	**22**	**9.7%**
Total	226	100%

The data from students' responses to questions 3 through 5 indicate that the majority of respondents have a positive attitude to reading despite the evidence that nearly three quarters of these students estimate that reading is not a preferred activity in which they engage frequently. The data additionally demonstrates that while they may not read frequently on their own volition, the majority of students feel confident in their reading skills.

Table 4: Library Use

6. "Do you visit the public library?"	Frequency	Percent
A lot	7	3.1%
Sometimes	107	47.3%
Never	112	49.6%
Total	226	100%

7. "How often do you use the school library?"	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	30	13.3%
Every Week	91	40.3%
Every Month	16	7.1%
Less Often	86	38.1%
Never	3	1.3%
Total	226	100%

8. "Do you use the library more now than when you were in Years 1 - 3?"	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	4	1.8%
More Often Now	66	29.2%
Less Often Now	97	42.9%
About the Same	59	26.1%
Total	226	100%

9. "Do you borrow books from the library?"	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	3	1.3%
Often	34	15%
Sometimes	95	42%
Never	94	41.6%
Total	226	100%

10. "What types of books do you borrow?"	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	3	1.3%
Fiction	32	14.2%
Non Fiction	25	11.1%
Both	72	31.9%
Never Borrow Books	94	41.6%
Total	226	100%

The data highlighted in Table 4 yield interesting findings with regard to the manner in which JCSP graduates view themselves as library users. While in many of the library schools, library lessons are not timetabled for senior cycle students, over half (N=121) of those who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they continue to use the school library on at least a weekly basis, with over 55% (N=125) estimating that they are using the school library to the same degree, or more so, than they did while in the junior cycle. While borrowing estimates are fairly evenly divided between those who borrow and those who do not, an interesting finding is with respect to public library use (Question 6) amongst JCSP graduates in the library schools. Over half the respondents (N=112) indicated that they do use the public library, a meaningful figure when the documented trend within the Library and Information Science literature is that there is usually a marked decline in public library usage once individuals enter adolescence. This unanticipated result deserves more in-depth investigation than is possible within this study in terms of the effect that school library services have on encouraging students to make use of their public libraries.

Table 5: ICT Use and Skills

11. "Do you use a computer at home?"	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	5	2.2%
Yes	178	78.8%
No	43	19%
Total	226	100%

12. "How often co you use the computers in the library?"	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	5	2.2%
Everyday	16	7.1%
Weekly	74	32.7%
Monthly	55	24.3%
Infrequently	64	28.3%
Never	12	5.3%
Total	226	100%

13. "How much do you think you know about using computers?"	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	7	3.1%
An Expert	10	4.4%
Knows a lot	58	25.7%
Knows enough to get by	127	56.2%
Knows a little	24	10.6%
Knows Nothing	0	0%
Total	226	100%

From their responses to question 11, it is clear that the majority of respondents (N=178) have access in their homes to ICTs which may explain why many of the JCSP graduates who participated in this study (57.9%) do not use the libraries' electronic resources on a regular basis. Nevertheless, for those who do, provided with a selection of different ICT uses and applications (Appendix B), 56.2% (N=127) indicated that they use the library's electronic resources for preparing and writing assignments or projects with 59.3% (N=134) of the students stating that they went to the school library to search for information on the Internet.

Tables 6 and 7 present students' responses to questions that sought to measure their evaluation of the impact of the school library on their educational and whole person development.

Table 6: Library's Contribution to Skills and Development

14. "School Library has helped my reading skills…"

	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	9	4%
Yes	148	65.5%
No	69	30.5%
Total	226	100%

15. "School Library has helped me read more…"

	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	9	4%
Yes	132	58.4%
No	85	37.6%
Total	226	100%

16. "School Library has helped me enjoy reading more…"

	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	9	4%
Yes	122	54%
No	95	42%
Total	226	100%

17. "School Library has helped me read different authors…"

	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	9	4%
Yes	129	57.1%
No	88	38.9%
Total	226	100%

18. "School Library has helped me do better school work…"

	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	9	4%
Yes	141	62.4%
No	76	33.6%
Total	226	100%

19. "School Library has helped me feel confident about school work…"

	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	9	4%
Yes	137	60.6%
No	80	35.4%
Total	226	100%

20. "School Library has helped me do better in exams…"

	Frequency	Percent
No Answer	9	4%
Yes	134	59.3%
No	83	36.7%
Total	226	100%

21. "School Library has helped me feel better about finding information…"

	Frequency	Percent
no answer	9	4%
Yes	171	75.7%
No	46	20.4%
Total	226	100%

22. "School Library has helped me think about and plan for my future…"

	Frequency	Percent
no answer	9	4%
Yes	101	44.7%
No	116	51.3%
Total	226	100%

In general responses to questions related to specific areas in which the library may be perceived as having a positive impact indicate that the majority of JCSP graduates believe that their experiences in the school library have made a difference in terms of their literacy skills, their educational achievements, and their self-esteem and confidence within an academic context. The role the libraries have played in terms of developing students' information literacy skills is reflected in the finding that over three-quarters of student respondents indicated that the library had helped them to feel more confident in their information seeking. While more than half (N=116) of the students indicated that the library had not played a role in helping them to plan for their futures, the fact that 101 students did identify the library as impacting on their aspirations supports the proposition (Williams & Wavell, 2001) that school libraries can have an impact on students' holistic as well as curricular-based development.

Table 7: Value of Library Service and Resources to Studies

23. "Has the book collection helped you with your studies?"	Frequency	Percentage
No Answer	15	6.6%
Yes	152	67.3%
No	59	26.1%
Total	226	100%

24. "Has Internet access in the library helped you with your studies?"	Frequency	Percentage
No Answer	16	7.1%
Yes	196	86.7%
No	14	6.2%
Total	226	100%

25. "Has the librarian helped you with your studies?"	Frequency	Percentage
No Answer	16	7.1%
Yes	187	82.7%
No	23	10.2%
Total	226	100%

26. "Have the non-book resources helped you with your studies?"	Frequency	Percentage
No Answer	16	7.1%
Yes	168	74.3%
No	42	18.6%
Total	226	100%

27. "Have library classes helped you with your studies?"	Frequency	Percentage
No Answer	16	7.1%
Yes	157	69.5%
No	53	23.5%
Total	226	100%

28. "Have library clubs and activities helped you with your studies?"	Frequency	Percentage
No Answer	16	7.1%
Yes	108	47.8%
No	102	45.1%
Total	226	100%

It is clear from the data presented in Table 7 that, in the students' opinion, the different services and resources available in the JCSP libraries have contributed meaningfully to the work they have done in school. With the exception of library based clubs and activities, on average, 76.1% (N=172) of the student respondents indicated that they had been helped in their school work and studies by the library service, with a particular emphasis on the role of the librarian (82.7%) and the electronic resources available in the library (86.7%).

In addition to measuring students' use and views of the school library, the questionnaire also sought their perspectives on their experience of second-level education both during the junior cycle and presently in the senior cycle. Respondents were asked to identify their favourite, as well as, least favourite curricular subjects. The results of their responses are presented in the following diagrams.

Diagram 1: Favourite Subject in School
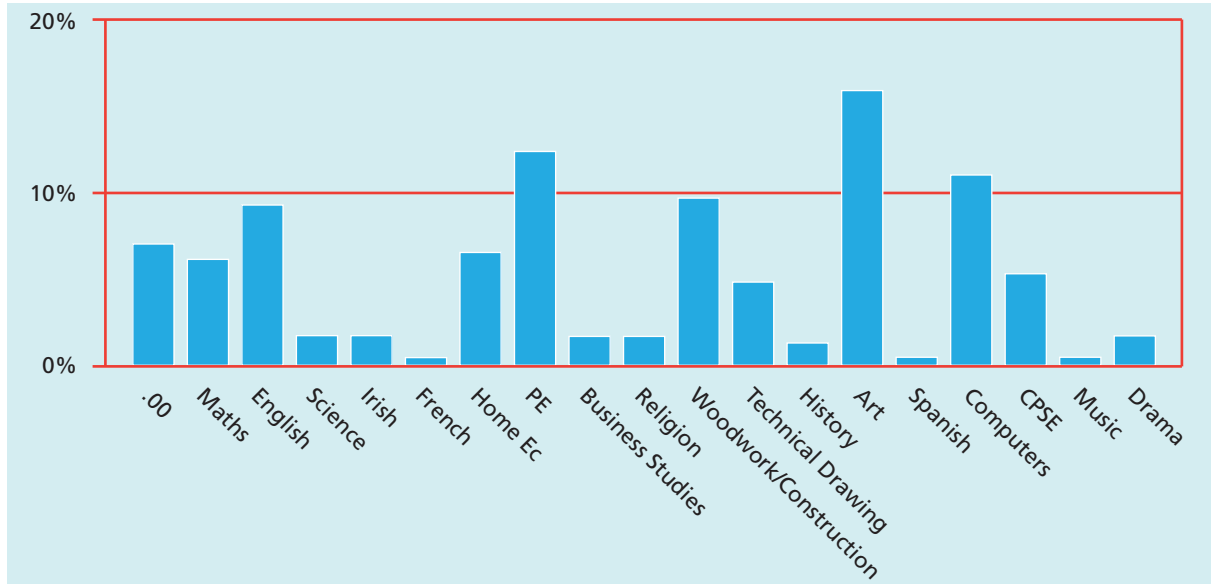
As depicted in Diagram 1, there was a wide range of subjects selected in response to the question. The three most frequently identified favourite subjects by the JCSP graduates were Art (15.9%, N=36), Physical Education (12.4%, N=28), and ICT/Computers (11.1%, N=25).

Diagram 2: Least Favourite Subject in School
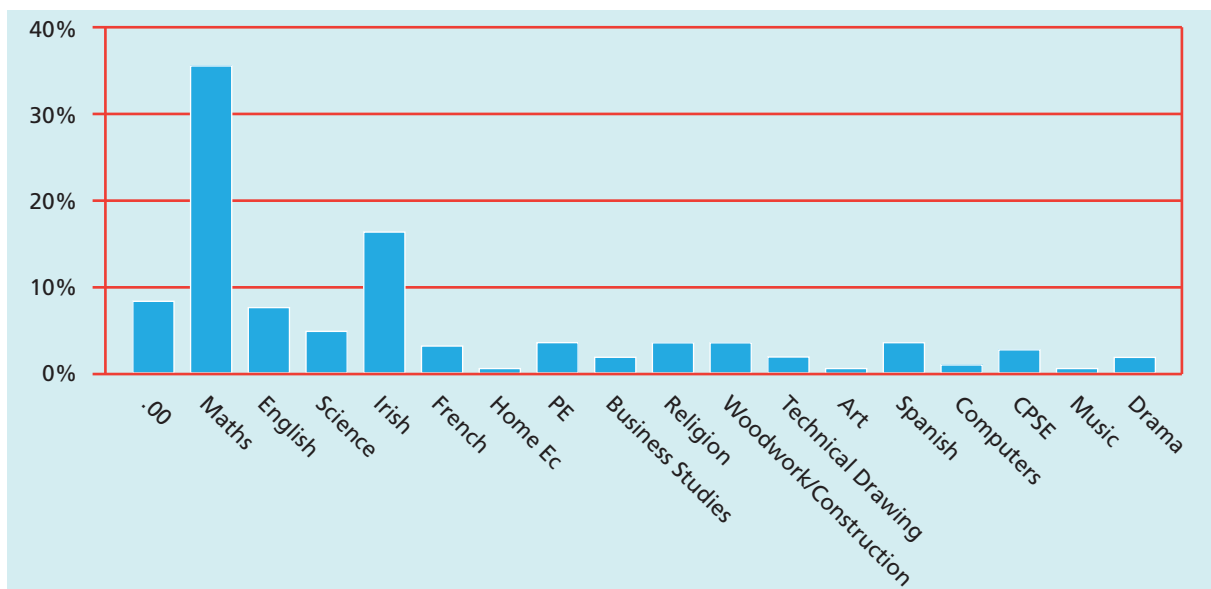
In comparison to the selection of favourite subjects, the results from the responses identifying least favourite subject were more concentrated with 35.4% (N=80) identifying Maths, with Irish being the next most frequently cited (16.4%, N=37).

Respondents were additionally asked to remember their feelings when they received the results of their Junior Certificate examination and to identify whether they were happy; pleased with most of their results; pleased with a few of their results; or not happy. The percentages for each reported reaction are presented in the following diagram.

Diagram 3: Reactions to Junior Certificate Results

Legend:
- Pleased Generally
- Mixed Feelings
- Not Happy
- 00
- Happy
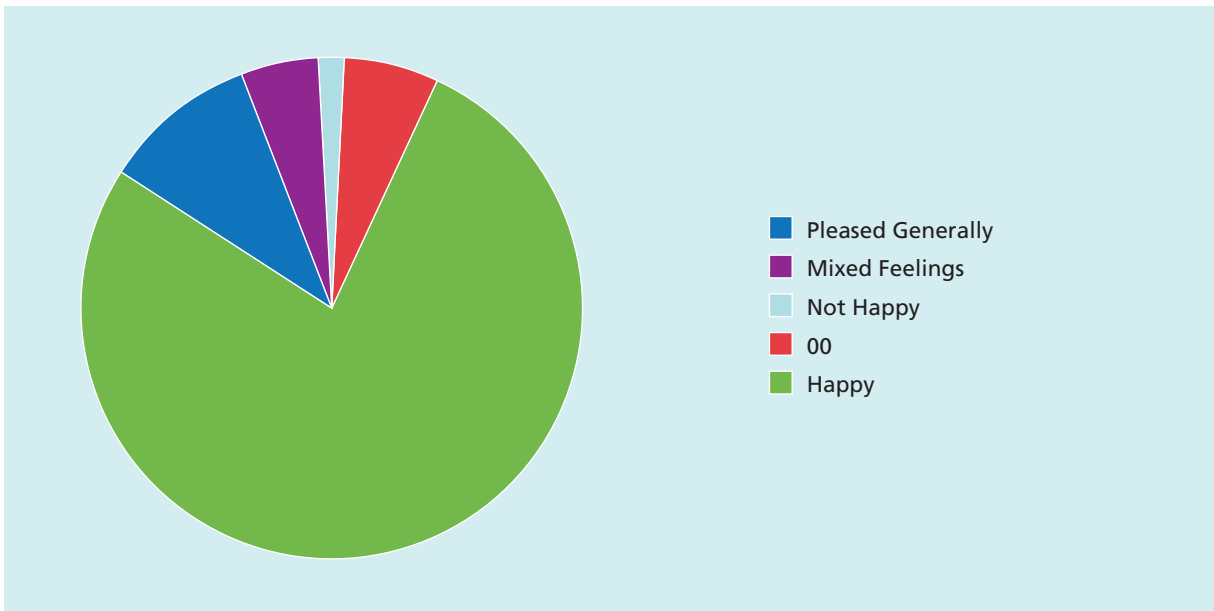
As shown in Diagram 3, the majority (88.9%, N=201) of the students who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they were either happy or pleased with most of their results, with only four answering that they had been unhappy when they received their examination results. The positive reaction suggests that the majority of JCSP graduates who participated in Phase One of the Study had experienced a sense of achievement upon completing the Junior Certificate that may contribute to the development of their self-esteem, confidence and self-efficacy.

The majority of respondents (73.5%, N=166) indicated that, at the time of the study, they were studying for the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), with 20.4% (N=46) identifying the Leaving Certificate or the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) as their course of senior cycle study. The students were asked to evaluate how they felt they were progressing in their studies in the senior cycle. The results of their responses are presented in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4: Progress in the Senior Cycle

Legend:
- Doing Okay
- Could Improve
- 00
- Doing Well
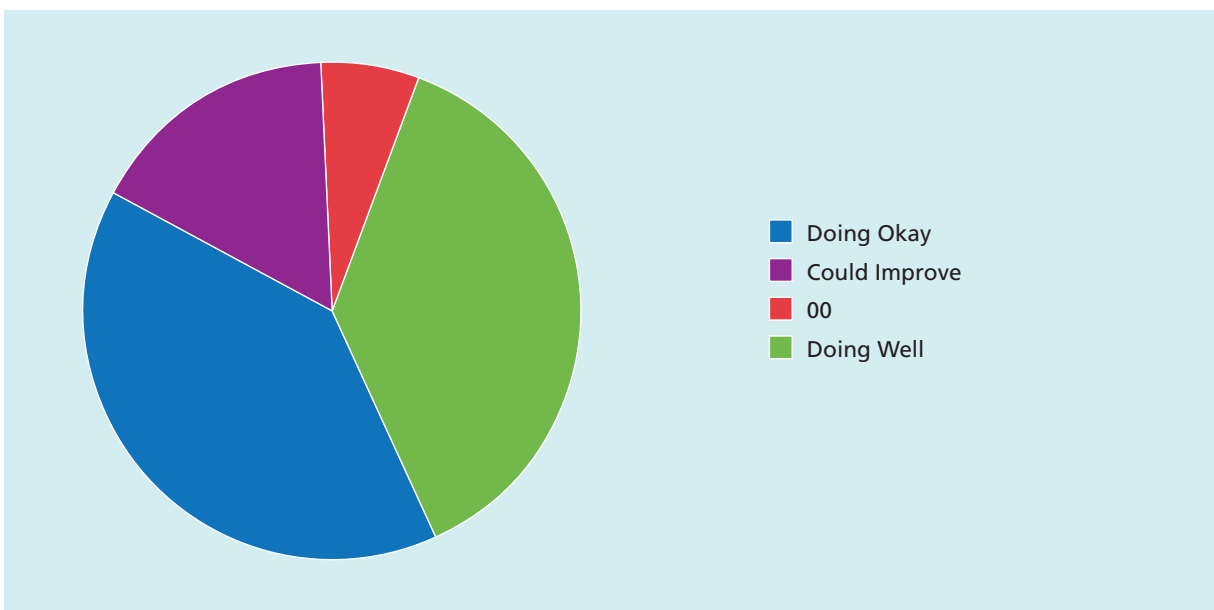
As represented in Diagram 4, the majority of JCSP graduates in the nine library schools (77.9%; N=176) believe that they are making progress with their studies in the senior cycle. This statistic, coupled with the figure for those students who were pleased with their Junior Certificate examination results, suggests that the students who participated in the study, all of whom had library services from the beginning of their junior cycle, have, and continue to experience, positive associations with their second-level education.

The final part of the questionnaire asked students to think beyond the senior cycle and to indicate what they hope to do with their lives once they have finished post-primary school. The results from the 226 completed questionnaires are depicted in the following diagram:

Diagram 5: Plans and Hopes for the Future
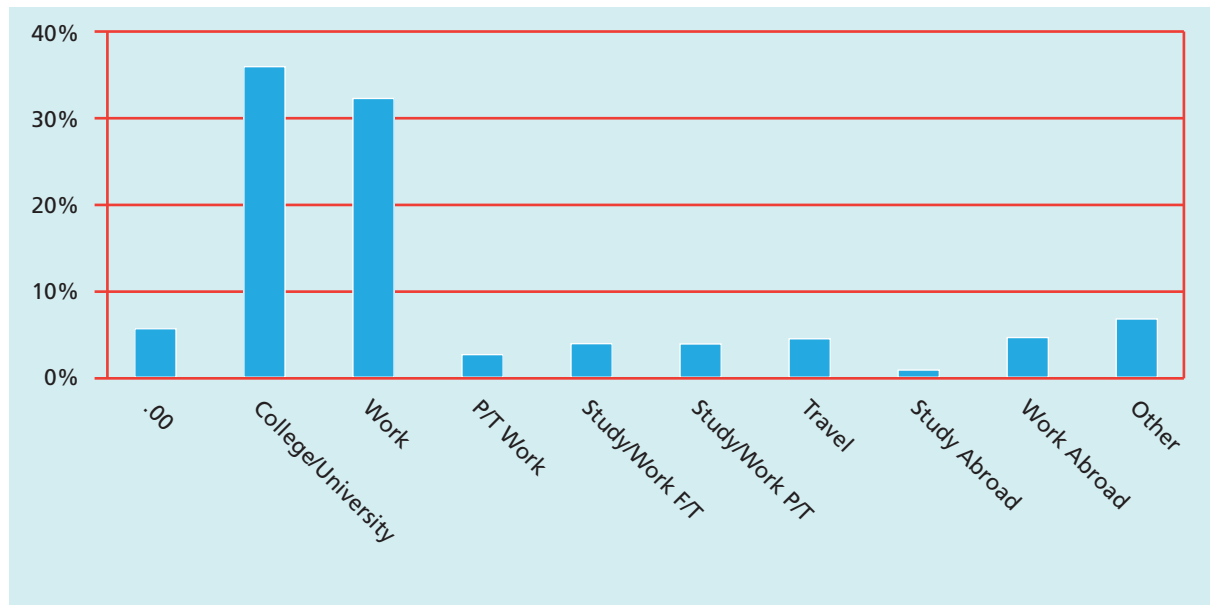
A frequency analysis of the responses to this question indicates that the number of students who hope to attend college or university (36.7%, N=83) is only approximately 5% more than those who intend to go straight into employment after post-primary school (31%, N=70). However on-going education at a variety of levels appears to be more widespread with the percentage of respondents indicating plans to continue their studies at 45.1% (N=102). Based on this finding one could argue that their experiences in post-primary school, particularly those that are perceived as positive, have played a role in encouraging these JCSP graduates to envisage education as an integral component in their futures as adults. This finding, set alongside those presented in Table 6, would also suggest that the library has played a role in developing students' long-term educational aspirations by providing supports and services during their second level education (Questions 18, 19, 20, 21, 22).

3.2.2 Student Questionnaire: Qualitative Data

In addition to the multiple choice questions, the student questionnaire contained several short answer, open questions to provide student respondents with the opportunity to contribute their more individualised views on their education and their aspirations for the future. Respondents, in completing questionnaires, offered their impressions of their attributes both inside and outside school, identified what made them happy, as well as unhappy, when they were in the junior cycle, and described specific ambitions they had once they complete their second-level education. The following are a selection of these responses:

In school I am good at academics. Outside of school I am good at sports. I was happiest in school when I was reading with my friends in the library. I was not happy in school when the teachers were piling on the pressure for the Junior Cert exams. My goals after secondary school are I would like to become a professional artist or possibly an art teacher.

I was happiest in school when in the library or on the computers. I was not happy in school when I was in classes which I did not enjoy. My goals after secondary school are I hope to go to college in England and when I am in England I hope to travel around the world.

In school I am good at listening and following instructions. Outside of school I am good at sports. I was happiest in school when I was playing PE or taking part in sports activities held at the school. I was not happy in school when I had to get projects done for the Junior Cert. My goals after secondary school are to get a degree in Criminal Justice studies and then onto the Garda Training College to become a qualified garda.

In school I am good at writing English essays and summaries. Outside of school I am good at hurling, football, soccer, table tennis etc. I was happiest in school when we got plenty of English homework – reading our novel was the best. I was not happy in school when we got plenty of Irish homework because we would have to write 300-600 word essays on different topics. My goals after secondary school are I would like to become a professional snooker player playing on all the big match events and tournaments but I would also like reading to be part of my life.

In school I am good at using my head. I was happiest in school when I was in the library. I was not happy in school when [XXX] broke my leg. My goals after secondary school are to be a British Touring car driver and build my own house and become a millionaire.

I was happiest in school when I was writing my poetry in the library. I was not happy in school when I did not have more time in the library. My goals after secondary school are I would like to become a chef but I really would like to write and direct movies.

I was happiest in school when my librarian and the library had helped my reading improve. I also like chatting to my mates. I was not happy in school when we thought we were going to lose our librarian, but we got to keep her as our librarian. My goals are to do a childcare course and then go into business with my sister.

In school I am good at Art, Home Economics. I was happiest in school when I was in the library. I was not happy in school when in IT class. My goals after secondary school are I want to become a chef and travel around the world and open my own restaurant.

I am good at Computers and Maths. Outside of school I am good at volunteering for Youth Club. My goals after secondary school are to go to college to do youth work and work in a youth club in my community.

I was happiest in school when I was in the library we used to have a laugh. People used to come from City Bank and help us read. My goals after secondary school are to go to college for travel and tourism and then go be a rep.

In school I am good at Maths. Outside of school I am good at sports. My goals after secondary school are I hope to go to college to further my education.

In school I am good at speaking my mind. Outside of school I am good at bikes and computers. I was happiest in school when I was making friends and building self-confidence. I was not happy in school when being bullied. My goals after secondary school are writing, reading, spelling, computers, drawing, road safety, cooking, web design, materials working with my hands and public speaking.

In school I am good at computers and assignments. My goals after secondary school are I want to study nursing but am terrified! I want to do volunteer work in foreign countries.

I was happiest in school when I had time to use the library to read in peace and to do work. When I was in Years 1-3, I was not happy in school when I was pressured in subjects. My goals after secondary school are music technician and music production.

While 29% (N=65) of the 226 students did not describe their specific goals for their futures, the responses from those that did (71%, N=161) are similar in content to those highlighted above. Additionally students indicated that they would like to pursue a range of different endeavours including joining the Army, Navy and Fire Brigade; studying and working with computers; obtaining apprenticeships in carpentry, plumbing, auto mechanics and electrical engineering; studying to become beautician/hairdressers; studying and practising architecture, accountancy, and engineering, equestrian studies and sports related professions. In addition to the types of education and work related goals that emerged from their responses, the students also identified lifestyle aspirations that they hoped to achieve including financial stability, home ownership, international travel, marriage, children and personal happiness. The essence of the responses from the 161 students is that these JCSP graduates are positive and ambitious in planning out their futures.

3.3 Phase Two: Semi-Structured Interviews with Adults

Upon completion of the transcription of the audio recordings of the nine interviews and the return of amended interview scripts by participants, the data was entered in NVivo 7 qualitative analysis software for coding and analysis. From the nature of the questions contained in the original semi-structured interview schedules (Appendix E) as well as from content and depth of the conversations that developed during the individual interviews, a range of categories and themes emerged from the data that inform the presentation of the qualitative findings from this phase of the research study.

3.3.1 School Library's Impact on Educational Outcomes

The principals, JCSP co-ordinators, and librarians in the three participating library schools were asked questions to assess the educational impact of the school library on JCSP students, with a particular emphasis on those students who have completed the junior cycle and have enrolled in the senior cycle. Participants' responses can be categorised according to three predominant themes within educational outcomes including Reading Skills; Examination Results; and Aspirations.

3.3.1.1 Reading Skills

All of the adult participants discussed the impact the libraries have had on improving the reading skills of the JCSP students. The principals all stated that in their view the literacy skills of their students had improved because of the emphasis given to reading by the library programmes. One principal supported this opinion by the results of an informal, small research study he conducted in his school that found

…there were indicators there suggesting that the students who integrated themselves into what the library was about, using the library before or after school, borrowing books, good reading patterns at home, they were the students who made the most progress. Interestingly the student who made the most progress, dramatic progress in her reading age, was a student who had a prior history of reading problems in primary school, even though it was at this low level, but in the library she had read the most books, she was the student that made the most progress. And the second, third and fourth students in that particular order, those were the students who had actually borrowed the most books. The sample was small but again it is just another indicator.

While the access to a wide range of reading materials that the libraries provide was highlighted as an important factor in improving students' literacy skills, the adults went further to suggest that it is the methods the librarians use to enable their students to increase their reading experiences that have, in the long-term, had the most critical effect on educational outcomes. The methods employed by librarians in all of the JCSP libraries share similar objectives but can vary in terms of the strategies employed. One librarian described the particular approach that she has developed from the experiences of working in the same library since 2002 in this way:

I am giving them homework, we are pushing them in terms of we don't let them sit and read the easy books, they must move on and on and up a level, up a level. If we have any hope of really changing the division in disadvantage then you have to start treating these children exactly the same as you would if you were in [fee-paying school] and start to raise the expectations for them. So this is something, we started it last year, but I have really kicked it into gear this year now. And it's tough because sometimes you meet huge resistance especially from older ones. Now a lot of people would think my approach is very coercive and very strict and children have the right to say no to reading and all this. The more I am doing it this way, the more I am beginning to see results. And it is like the "Jamie Oliver" approach. When Jamie Oliver took the chips off the menu, the kids started eating vegetables, well of course they did. If somebody puts chips down in front of me I'll eat chips every day instead of vegetables. But if I take away the choice and it becomes completely routine and a total habit, which is what we are trying to get them to do anyway, is get them a habit of reading. A child of 12 is not going to think to do that if they don't have a history of reading, if there are no books in the home, if Mommy or Daddy can't read or won't read or won't help them with their homework reading. But if we put everything in place and normalise it you are seeing huge changes…You won't get children after a year of doing it constantly who will say I hate reading. They might hate having to sit down and being quiet for a little while, but when they are here hearing a story they don't hate it.

Other participants referred to the impact of a consistent library programme of reading interventions on students' educational outcomes. Many raised anecdotal evidence of first year JCSP students with limited reading skills who had developed into confident readers in the senior cycle because of the work done in the school library. An example of this type of development was given by one principal in this way:

They come in first year, and they use the library, they gain more confidence and become more happy about reading books. They might never be great readers but it certainly makes them read more and makes them look at textbooks more and makes school more meaningful for them. Not all of them will buy into it, but we have a young fellow this year doing his Leaving Cert. He was virtually a non-reader. He read more books in third year than any other student. He was the biggest reader in our school and he was virtually a non-reader in first year. And he is now a Leaving Cert student and he is full of confidence. I have not seen any student who got more benefit out of the library than him. That would be an example of a student who blossomed in the library.

Several participants remarked that they thought that some JCSP graduates' skills had deteriorated somewhat since moving into the senior cycle because they were no longer timetabled for library classes.

3.3.1.2 Examination Results

All nine of the adult participants stated that Junior Certificate examination results for JCSP students in their schools had improved during the five years of the presence of the school libraries. One JCSP co-ordinator related the most pronounced improvement in certain subject areas as follows:

Well I took a look through records to see if there were any trends and I would say one of the things is that there were fewer students taking Foundation Level and some students taking Higher Level which hadn't been a tradition here. So I suppose having Higher Level students that is a big difference. The students who are taking Ordinary Level, became more likely to get a C, a B, or an A than a D. Whereas prior to that they would have been far more likely to get a D than any other result. So that kind of lifted their game I suppose, beyond the minimum. That would cover English. Then I looked at Art. The Art Department has bought into the library. They do extremely well and more of them would take Higher than Ordinary Level. More of them continue it through to Leaving Cert and more of them do well at Higher Level. So I would say, the interest that the Art Department has taken in the library has had a role in lifting students' results. I suppose those would be the two most noticeable trends.

Participants in the other two schools similarly discussed specifically the improved English examination results as well as how different subject areas had benefited through engagement with the library and use

of library resources to prepare students for the Junior Certificate examination. One principal summarised the library's impact on examination results by stating "it gives them the support in school that they never had before and it gives them better exam results".

3.3.1.3 Aspirations

In terms of attributing to the school libraries a role in extending their students' future aspirations and goals, there was a range of views with some participants reluctant to over-emphasise this type of impact. Nevertheless, there were other adults who identified the library's clear role in this regard as described in this way by one co-ordinator:

I would say what it has done for senior cycle that I noted about them, is that it has made them more ambitious for themselves. It definitely has. When they come up here, they see a wider range of options and they will go out and think I could do that. It had never happened before, but I hear them talking about that they would like to be a teacher. Twenty years ago I was teaching a class and going through a questionnaire that had been sent to the school. And one of the questions was would you be willing to stay in a low status job? And when I explained that to them this girl says "Oh I get you, like a teacher or a social worker". But I think in part because of the way they see teachers, the need to plan, getting materials from the library for a class…I think it has changed their whole idea of work, work is something that you might like to spend extra time on. So I think they definitely have gotten more ambitious… I think the library has changed the mindset. If you think about the library visitors… it just makes the world an even bigger, more colourful place.

The librarians when interviewed were less willing to claim a direct role in contributing to students' future aspirations, but did relate anecdotes of conversations they have had over the years with different students and information that they have provided in the library that may have helped students to develop both educational and career goals. One librarian describing the range of factors that can contribute to a student's aspirations commented on the indirect way the library may have an impact as follows:

I think because they are more comfortable around books that possibly the thoughts of going on to further education would be more appealing to them. I think maybe on an unconscious level…they might not be aware that the library has an effect on them… and I certainly don't do any career stuff in the library. I think it probably has retained students into the senior cycle that will give them the opportunity then that they will have their Leaving Cert. And I do hear them speaking about the things they want to be and they do aspire to have a job…but I don't know if it is directly due to the library, it probably played a role maybe in terms of it has kept them in school and the longer they stay in school, well then the greater their aspirations will be, their view that more things are possible.

Most of the adults provided examples of how the library had helped students to build confidence and that this, in turn, encouraged them to set more challenging goals for themselves. One participant related the following example of a JCSP student whose engagement with library resources during the Junior Certificate contributed to his educational aspirations in the Leaving Certificate:

…there is a boy who discovered a love of History, and has gone through all the History books and is studying History for the Leaving Cert and he is not from the 6th Year LCVP class, he is from the 6th Year LCA class who would not I suppose be academic, but yet he is motivated in an academic way. He would out do me in any quiz on Geography or History and yet he is not an academic student. Yet I think he is a real student in the sense that he has followed his passion, he is not doing a subject because he has been told this is what he has to do, this is the programme. He has followed his passion, he has found an area, and he is studying it and he is using the resources that are around him to do it. There are definitely golden moments.

3.3.2 JCSP Students and the Senior Cycle

The consensus amongst the adults interviewed was that, as a programme, particularly with the provision of a professionally run school library, the JCSP is operating very successfully in their respective schools. They suggested that, for all of their schools, this success in the junior cycle has contributed to the need for administration and teaching staffs to increasingly re-evaluate and, in some cases, adapt the structures and pedagogical approaches used in senior cycle. In no small part because of the particular characteristics of the three library schools, each had different approaches to the senior cycle thus providing different experiences for JCSP graduates. For example, one of the schools, in which all junior cycle students are in JCSP, has of late, provided students with the option to study for the LCVP, as well as, the LCA. This school additionally is actively developing and extending the range of Post-Leaving Certificate options available to past students and the broader community. Alternatively, another school offers a Transition Year after the Junior Certificate and the range of Leaving Certificate options including Leaving Certificate, LCVP, and LCA. For the first time, eleven JCSP graduates in this school had opted to study for the ordinary Leaving Certificate. As a result the principal in this school, at the time of the interview, was investigating the possibility of introducing a Supported Leaving Certificate in order to meet the needs of these particular students. Similarly, as a means to help students to bridge the gap between junior cycle and senior cycle, another school had, for the first time, introduced a Transition Year. While hopeful that this option would be successful in the years to come, the principal in this school described the difficulties of attracting students, particularly those who had participated in the JCSP, to take up the Transition Year this way:

We were finding at senior cycle that students, using that year could be brought into a different grade of studying. It is a very big jump for students, particularly for students who really have been taking subjects at Foundation Level, Maths in particular, and that actually impacts as they go through. So we thought that an extra year would give us the time to build a firmer foundation for the Leaving Cert course. This year is the first year that we have a Transition Year. In this particular area Transition Year has got a reputation as an extra year in school. The idea is that we want to remain on in school for our Leaving Cert, but, I would say that they want to do the Leaving Cert in the quickest time as possible. So I would think that the majority of students would want to do their Leaving Cert both at the parental level and themselves, but would say can we do it in the two years rather than three years. What contributes to that is just that sense that I want to see the end line you know, and two years is shorter than three. But I think that will change over time.

Despite the different approaches to senior cycle evident across the three library schools, what each of the schools shared was the recognition that their senior cycle is a work in progress and that staff are committed to developing educational programmes that will benefit all students, including those who have participated in the JCSP.

3.3.2.1 Retention of JCSP Students into Senior Cycle

The adults were asked if they thought that there had been a meaningful increase in the number of JCSP students who have stayed on to the senior cycle since the introduction of the JCSP school library and, if so, what, in their views, are the most instrumental factors in bringing about that development.

In discussing retention rates among JCSP graduates, the adults, particularly the co-ordinators and principals, were certain that during the five years that the libraries have been operational, the number of JCSP students in their respective schools staying on into the senior cycle, has increased. One co-ordinator described the situation in her school as follows:

Definitely we would see a change. And in terms of how we would have predicted the outcome within the first few years of change. We used to lose 20% of students before Junior Cert. Of the ones remaining maybe another 20 to 30% would leave after Junior Cert. Now, by and large, they all return to school the September after the Junior Cert. You do tend to lose them between 5th Year and Leaving Cert in the LCA programme not in the LCVP. So the ones that are academically more able definitely

come back and stay the course, which is not always what they did before. I suppose it is the advantages of education.

In describing this change that her school has experienced in recent years, this same co-ordinator identified what she viewed to be the factors driving this development in this way:

The Welfare Board has an impact and the Home School Liaison over the last five years. There are other factors in addition to the impact of the library but I suppose in people's experience that the library's impact has been in improving their experience of school and their level of motivation for staying on in school.

Similarly, a principal in another of the three library schools, was definite that the number of students staying on into the senior cycle has grown significantly since the opening of the school library, and described the variety of factors impacting on this development thus:

But again its very hard to split on the JCSP influence because if you just look around the area we are living in, the whole area is in a state of flux and regeneration and certainly during the six years, there has been a sea change in peoples' aspirations… Now we have an impact in terms of raising the expectations of what our students can achieve, but I can also see how the area is changing, the patterns of future work opportunities are changing and therefore education is critically important.

He went further to clarify the role of the school, and particularly that of the library in respect of contributing to this evolution in educational expectation and engagement in this way:

I mean by that to identify very, very early on what gaps (nb. Educational) are there and attempting to bridge those gaps. The library has been hugely influential in that context. And that cumulative approach actually, you know, that stats actually show it. The majority of 3rd Year students now want to move on into senior cycle. Six years ago you would be looking at 50%. A hugely significant change. Potential early school leavers ten years ago would have been students who possibly would have left school at 14 or 15 years of age before their Junior Cert. Now we are having to change potential early school leavers into a different format, they would now be students who won't go on to their Leaving Cert. At a parental level there is an expectation now that the children have a right to actually remain on in education, there is not the economic pressure to get out there and get a job at 16 or 17. But I think one of the benefits is that we have kept pace with student needs. And again I come back to the library as the key, as the model of identifying what level students are at, what gaps they have.

While the participants raised a number of common factors both within and outside their school communities that have been influential in the increase in the number of JCSP students who have continued their education past the Junior Certificate during the past five years, all were clear that the provision of continuous library services to students during this period had a clear impact on motivating and encouraging them to stay on into the senior cycle. As one principal commented "it is helping people to help make school more meaningful for them… it is certainly making them stay on in school".

3.2.2.2 JCSP Students' Transition to Senior Cycle

Because the adults had all witnessed increasing numbers of JCSP students entering the senior cycle over the past five years, participants were asked to assess the nature of the transition these students underwent in the process and whether they were able to do so successfully. All of the adults regarded the transition from the junior cycle to the senior cycle to be a challenge for most of their students. In terms of JCSP students, a number of factors were raised that could make the transition particularly difficult for them. One co-ordinator explained the situation in her school in this way:

It can be the most problematic. There are a few reasons for that. JCSP is a very positive structure and we get an awful lot of comments from parents that there is nothing like JCSP for them in 5th Year,

there are no awards or certificates. That sense of achievement. Senior cycle tends to be more subject centred than students experienced in junior cycle. In junior cycle, particularly if they took the Foundation Level or Ordinary Level, most likely it is a challenge. It is a two year programme, because we don't have Transition Year. We really need more time than we have to give them the supports they need to get through.

A librarian in a school with an established Transition Year describing the ways in which this year could help JCSP students, concurred that many still had difficulties because of the absence of supports as follows:

The Transition Year can be a brilliant coming of age but then it doesn't suit everybody. I think 4th Year is always a much more social year and that's something where the JCSP students would have a chance to be very social and some of them are great sport players…so they thrive socially, unfortunately that doesn't necessarily transfer into school you know. Most of them I would have to say are well liked. But in 5th Year they don't have the literacy and numeracy interventions. Because of the intensity of the interventions that occur in JCSP, it doesn't necessarily transfer into LCA or mainstream.

The majority of participants believed that the transition into senior cycle was often difficult for JCSP graduates because of the nature of the work expected, the degree of independent study required, and the absence of the academic supports and interventions they had experienced in the JCSP. One co-ordinator summed up the general view of participants when she said "…it would be great if they could be supported by a similar scheme in senior cycle".

3.3.3 Library's Role in the Senior Cycle Experience of JCSP Graduates

Because this study set out to investigate the longitudinal impact of the school library on students who had taken part in the *Room for Reading* research, now enrolled in the senior cycle, the adults were asked to describe the library's role in the senior cycle experience of these students within each of their respective schools. In general, while the evidence given varies somewhat between the schools, the overall view confirms the data from the students' questionnaire in that while JCSP graduates are not using their libraries to the same extent that they did while in the junior cycle, many do take advantage of the resources and services there on a regular basis.

Because each of the library schools has its own particular unique characteristics, including number of students, timetabling constraints, physical environments, etc, provision of library services to senior cycle students varies across the three schools. In the case of one school, provision in the library's schedule has been made to accommodate a weekly library class for senior cycle students described by the librarian in this way:

I said to them when they were receiving their awards in third year that you know I still want to see them using the library. That ok this is a JCSP library but you are still more than welcome to use the library and that I would hope you keep up your reading. I think that's what is happening…the fact they are timetabled and they are coming in for one English class a week, is definitely something that has allowed them to stay in contact. Possibly they are reading more and are more open to reading because there has been that continuous thread. That thread is still there. If they weren't coming in, we would have lost them altogether and they wouldn't even read a magazine. They are not coming in at lunchtime at senior level. They might pop in for the last five minutes or you know. Whereas at least if they are coming in for timetabled English class once a week, they are, I think, reading more than what they would do if they weren't coming in.

Another librarian, discussing the more informal structure of library use by the senior cycle students in her school, emphasised the project-driven nature of the LCA course and made the following observation about the impact of the library on students in the senior cycle:

They also come in and use it as a starting point which is kind of the biggest maturity… in JCSP they were brought in, it is scheduled into their day, they are here because they have to be. In LCA you can see the development where they get it…they get that the library is the starting point for absolutely everything, in fact there would nearly be some overdependence on it. And all their sources of information are the library. They also use it for extracurricular things. So they get the whole concept. I suppose then the biggest thing is leading them through fifth year and sixth year is to try to expand their horizons so that they know afterwards that there are libraries that can fulfil their information needs and that they continue that relationship past school, an understanding that the information community is larger, not just isolated to school.

She continued her description of the impact of the library in the senior cycle experience of JCSP graduates by discussing the continuation of the pastoral role of the librarian with students after they complete the JCSP in this way:

Because we have a certain amount of time with the LCA students who have come up through JCSP and you have a very close relationship with them and also that you are in a role that is very non-judgmental, it is not a teacher setting a plan or giving a grade and usually our form of discipline is humour. So you would cajole or you know you could be telling them what a fantastic person that they are and that you know this is brilliant and you should tell people that you can do this. Even like when they are going into their orals to present their task, they'll come down and they will be telling me about it and they will come afterwards because you will probably be the only person in the building that probably would say "Look how did it go?" A lot of it is psyching up, giving them time.

While the adults emphasised that the primary focus of the library service has been, and should continue to be providing for JCSP students and enhancing their experience of the junior cycle, there was an agreement that with more JCSP students continuing their studies into the senior cycle that library services should develop to support their continuing educational pursuits. One librarian made the following point:

I think it should continue the whole lifespan of school from when they come in in first year to the end of sixth year because I think that when they get to senior cycle they are really at the start of where they get it or they know school is going to end and they know that they have certain things that they have to do. I think it is more crucial nearly in fifth year and sixth year even if they are doing mainstream and they opt to do History which is, you know, all the subjects across the board are so written-driven, having to write essays or being able to communicate very clearly, so it is essential that it is continued. And you really do the fundamentals in JCSP, like trying to get them to read, to increase their vocabulary, to refine that and kind of pad it out doesn't happen for them in 5th and 6yth Years and that is where they are at a disadvantage…

At the time of this study it was clear that the library in a range of contexts, whether timetabled or more informally, continues to have a degree of impact on JCSP students' educational experiences once they have progressed to the senior cycle. In many instances though this impact, was described as more ancillary than core because of the nature of the senior cycle. One principal, observing that the library in his school is under-used by senior cycle students, explained his views in this way:

But I am not into a blame culture. I think we have a huge responsibility as teachers in this school to bring students to a state of independent thinking that the library will be a sort of a prime resource. That they would be thinking yes I can use the library. They are not doing so at the moment. But I don't park that on the library, that that's where the library is at. There is a two way process. I think it is a good reflector of what is happening across the board in senior cycle where students will come up through the Junior Cert but haven't made the next leap and that is going to impact hugely and more so as they leave the college and have to make their own independent way in life. (…)we haven't got our students to that particular level. That is a bigger debate than just what the library is doing you know for the students in the JCSP. I think it is a wider debate within the college as to how much are we inculcating a culture of dependency among our students and not having the courage ourselves to say no, dependency and independence go hand in hand.

3.4 JCSP School Libraries and the Future

At the time of this study, the three library schools participating in all phases of the investigation had been in continual operation for a period of five years. With that in mind, adult participants were asked to reflect upon the development of the libraries during that period and to share the ways in which they would hope to see the libraries evolve in the future. While some comments were specifically related to a particular library's context, for example individuals in one school all stated that the physical space allocated five years ago for the library would need extension in order to develop services in the future, there were several areas of future development that were commonly raised across participants from all three schools.

For example, individuals in all three schools discussed the evolution of ICT training and provision in the libraries during the past five years. Common amongst those who spoke of this aspect of library services was the hope that this would be expanded and updated in the years to come. One librarian expressed her plans in this area as follows:

I see huge scope for development there and for teaching about databases and information literacy through that. The demand for it is phenomenal. But there is massive scope there with that. And link that into the school's website. But I would see huge potential there for teaching of information literacy skills. Even by the computer teachers. We are losing one IT teacher this year, but the other IT teacher would be completely up for it, for getting involved. So there is massive potential there.

Other adults stated that they would be pleased to see an increase in the number of PCs and laptops available in the library, the introduction of whiteboards and other multimedia equipment, as well as the continued development of the library's software collection.

During their interviews a number of the adults spoke about the library's development during the past five years in terms of the evolution of teachers' engagement with, and use of the library both as single users and for class activities. All were clear that during the five years the number of teachers, across a range of subject areas, making use of the library had increased. Nevertheless, there was a general view that more teachers need to, as one principal stated, "buy into it". All three of the libraries have developed a range of resources to support teachers in their work, with one librarian describing her strategy to "bring" teachers in as follows:

I think here there is a focus on supporting teachers. I think that is something that we will be continuing. I find it is the same teachers that use the library and you have ones who were enthusiastic initially and then you get a few more, and then there are still those on the periphery. To bring those in, to find a way to bring them in, I deliberately go out of my way, if they won't come to me, I will route the magazine to them. I think they know that you're the librarian, and they know your agenda…they are the people that I don't have.

As part of envisaging the future of their libraries, the three librarians specifically were asked how they would hope to develop professionally in the years ahead as school librarians. All spoke of their interest in updating their individual ICT skills and knowledge, as described by one librarian in this way:

In terms of what I would like to learn more about would be definitely I think I need to update my computer skills. I don't know anything about blogs or anything else…lots of scope out there, even how to do a website, you know, basic skills because I haven't done anything like that since I was in college.

Additionally, they shared the view that their own professional service within their school communities could benefit from increased opportunities to experiment with strategies and to reflect on practice. One librarian stated:

I suppose we do a lot of things, but we need time to reflect a little bit more about things, we are doing things automatically. But I do think that the day is fairly packed and there is a need for time which

would include a lot of reflection because I often think tweak that or I could do that better. People think we have so much time on our hands but they don't understand the cataloguing, the reshelving, the tidying up, weeding.

Related to this view, co-ordinators and principals, throughout their interviews, spoke about the level and quality of the work and dedication that they had witnessed from their respective librarians over the past five years. With the continued development of library services within the schools, several adults stated that an area for future consideration should be in terms of personnel levels. One co-ordinator summarised this view as follows:

It would be fantastic to have a second person there on a continuous basis because it is very difficult for one person. There is a tremendous amount of work involved. Especially with JCSP students. In many cases they would require someone listening to them and reading aloud to them. It is not always possible for the librarian because they go in to her out of school times. It would be fantastic if she had a full-time assistant. I think that would be good. There is nothing you could fault with the library at the moment. If it stays up to that spec…it is just top notch.

3.5 Phase Three - Qualitative Focus Group Work with JCSP Graduates

As outlined in Section 2.2.1.3 the focus work was conducted in three library schools. The nineteen student participants included one fourth year student, thirteen fifth year students, and five sixth year students. All were JCSP Graduates. The work procedure, qualitative in nature, was consistent in all focus groups for example, participants created individual concept maps around the theme "My Future". They also completed "My Past, Present and Future Timeline", followed by individual, informal discussions with the researcher about their maps and timelines.

3.5.1 Maps

While the process of creating a concept map was explained and demonstrated by the researcher at the beginning of the focus group sessions, the students were given no instructions concerning the content or format of their maps apart from the request that each would be based on the common theme "My Future". Therefore, while some students gained ideas from observing their peers' mapping actions, in general participants engaged in the activity independently, the majority concentrating intently on the gradual development of their maps. As a result, the nineteen maps (Appendix H), while sharing a number of common themes, are unique and personalised representations of each individual's aspirations, priorities, interests, and self view. Field notes were taken by the researcher in order to record a range of elements associated with the maps including individual students' ease in creating their maps, their fluency in developing and linking concepts, the level of interest they demonstrated in the activity, and their willingness to explore aspects of their maps in more detail verbally with the researcher.

Initial analysis of the maps was on the level of specific data related to the individual's perception of their future. Common concepts across the maps, such as "Job", "College", "Travel", etc. were recorded along with an analysis of the number of conceptual hierarchies developed on individual maps. As a background to developing a more in-depth approach to map analysis, a study of multidimensional analyses of children's art (Cohen, 1998; Malchiodi, 1998; Pearson and Somekh, 2003) was undertaken. The development since the 1940s of the use of projective drawing tests to identify personality and emotional states has undergone scrutiny as "there has been no definite consensus about the meaning and purpose of art expressions and no singular, reliable way to interpret content" (Malchiodi, 1998, p.8). Having gathered from children a range of highly individualistic concept maps, Pearson and Somekh (2003) adopted a two dimensional analysis strategy, combining both semiotic (Warburton, 1998) and phenomenological interpretations. The former was used to identify signs and categories across the maps as a whole while the latter enabled the researchers to explore the individual differences between maps, to tease out the range of possible meanings within the imagery, and to account for the map maker's own experience and view of their world. In this study, each of the nineteen maps was studied to discover

evidence of meaning, in terms of the choices made by individuals in graphically representing their futures. The use of colour, illustration, symbols, the size and placement of text and the amount of white space on each map was studied and compared with the evidence from the field notes and interview data.

With the exception of a few, the maps generally provide a sense that the participants had given serious thought to their futures both in terms of employment and education. It emerged during the informal interviews at the end of the work that many of the students had, at the time of the study, begun to investigate the steps they would need to take in order to achieve their goals for the future. For example, one participant ("E", page 49) a fifth year student, engaged in the mapping activity in a very focused manner. He was silent during the activity and worked fluently and with ease in constructing the map in a highly organised manner. His map, while black and white, fills the page with hierarchical rungs linking in a logical progression. The interview data alongside the map data reveal that participant E has clearly defined future paths. His goal is to be a commercial pilot and to that end he had, at the time of the study, commenced a small plane pilot course. He explained that he was paying for the course himself, from money he earned working part-time at a hardware store, because "it will mean more to me" than if he allowed his parents pay the fees. Participant E's map clearly illustrates that he has investigated the different types of piloting careers that are available. Additionally he has included on his map an alternative or back-up should his primary aspiration fail, for example, on-going education and training in ICT. Participant E's determination, motivation, and optimism for the future came across consistently during the focus group work.

Another member of this particular focus group, participant G (page 50) by contrast was more tentative in constructing his map. While his plans did not seem as definitive and well investigated as participant E's, he is ambitious about his future in that it is his goal to become an archaeologist. He stated in his interview that he plans to go on to third-level education and study History as a means to help him to achieve his goal. Like his classmate, participant G has developed an alternative strategy of joining the Army, should he not achieve his primary goal. During his interview he explained that if he was not able to become an archaeologist, joining the Army would allow him to work in those parts of the world that are of archaeological interest to him. As with most of the nineteen participants, marriage and children feature on the participant G's map of his future.

In contrast to the maps of participant E and G, the map constructed by participant R (page 55), a fifth year LCA female student, is awash with colours. She made full use of the space provided on the sheet and incorporated a range of primary concepts in her composition. These primary concepts are interlinked, for example "Leaving Cert" and "College" and the development of her hierarchical conceptual ladders are complex. The map suggests, again in contrast to participant E and G, that participant R has set one career path, that being work related to childcare, without fall-back alternatives. However, it could be argued, from the map's construction, that she has thought carefully about how she will progress in her preferred field, i.e. "Leaving Cert" connected to "College". The next step is helping her sister in an established childcare business, from there obtaining experience working for "employers", with the ultimate aim to open and run "my own business" in a different location from where she was currently situated. Additionally, she includes in a separate area of her map the possibility of doing so in a foreign location. In discussing the composition of her map, participant R explained that she was employed part-time as a waitress in a local "five star" restaurant. She included this element on her map because she anticipated that this employment would continue in the future. However she had, as demonstrated on the map, calculated that she would continue to do so for the next two years by which time she will have gained the qualifications that she needs to pursue her goal to work in childcare. Participant R's map is one of two (the other being participant I's map, page 51) out of the nineteen that included familial concerns and responsibilities as a primary concept in their futures. Participant I, a fifth year male student, discussed this aspect of his map in terms of the responsibility he felt for ensuring that in the future, as his parents aged, that they would be "safe". Similarly, participant R during her interview described her ambition to be able to assist her mother financially.

The maps constructed by participant C, a Transition Year female student, and N, a fifth year male student, were interesting in that both students, prior to the focus group work, had been identified to the researcher as students who had started post-primary school with significant issues that could impede their educational progress. Participant C, the youngest of the nineteen students, in contrast to the older members of her particular focus group, constructed her map in a concentrated, fluent manner. The use of colour and space on the map, as well as the conceptual hierarchies, suggest that she has ambitious goals for her future once she completes her post-primary education. In describing her map, participant C explained that her plan was to complete the Leaving Certificate and gain work experience so that she would be able to apply for work in the financial sector. Her intention was to subsequently use that experience to create and run her own business. These endeavours would support her goals to be self-supporting and to own property both in Ireland and abroad.

While participant N's map is black and white, he used the space provided to fully depict the range of his current interests and future ambitions. From his map and the subsequent interview data it was clear that there were a number of career paths that he was interested in pursuing. In contrast to some of the other students, he had not explored, to any great extent, the routes he would need to take in order to achieve his goals, but clearly identified on-going education as a significant part of his future. His interest in literature is evident from his stated ambitions to become a journalist, author, and film-maker. The librarian in his school identified this student as one who had always been and continued in senior cycle to be, a regular library user.

In contrast to others highlighted in this report, participant H (page 50) appeared to find the mapping exercise problematic. Early in the process he had difficulty developing the primary concepts related to his future displaying frustration and seeking the assistance of both the researcher and other participants. His map is interesting in that "college" is placed in the top half of the map with that space left empty. In comparison the bottom half of the map containing "travel", "part-time work", "hobbies", and "friends" is colourful, dense, and image-rich. During his interview it emerged that he was working at a fast-food chain in order to finance his plans to travel after the Leaving Certificate. He said that he would continue to work there even though he had learned that work was available elsewhere that would offer a better salary. In his interview, participant H stated that he would "probably get work as a construction apprentice" but revealed that he had taken no steps to investigate this further. His map does not include marriage or children in the future. Friends, watching sports and participating in sports feature strongly on his map. Both the interview data and the contents of his map suggest that in comparison to some of the other students, participant H was, at the time of the study, more focused on the present than on planning for the years after the Leaving Certificate.

3.5.2 Timelines

The format of the timeline template given to each participant was devised in order to encourage students to not only project what they would like to be doing at specific intervals in the future, but as well to remember and record any positive and negative memories of each year of their second level education to date. Nineteen timelines were returned to the researcher. Several of the returned timelines were not completed fully.

Response categories for each of the sections of the timeline template were identified and tabulated in order to conduct frequency analyses on the data. In terms of the sections of the template that deal with the students' hopes for the future, the findings generally support those derived from their mapping exercises. Prior to reporting responses, it should be clarified that one participant, while creating a concept map and completing other sections of the timeline template, did not respond to any of the sections related to future hopes. Responses on the timeline with respect to hopes for 2008 were as follows:

Continuing Studies	12
Apprenticeship	2
Making New Friends	2
Working Part-time	2
Travel	1
Learning to Drive	1

As the majority of focus group participants were in fifth year, the number of responses indicating a hope next year to be continuing their studies is understandable. In terms of responses to what students' would like to be doing in 2012, the following provides a list of the categories and frequencies:

Continuing Studies in College/University	7
Apprenticeship	2
Working Full-time in a "Good" job	6
Working Part-time	2
Travel	5
Buying a House	1

These results illustrate that participants see continuing education and having a "good" job as being goals most desirable during the four to five years after completion of their senior cycle. As from the mapping data, participants defined jobs that were "good" as those in which they would be able to earn "enough" to "plenty" of money, as well as employment that was related to their personal interests and in which they could gain enjoyment and personal fulfilment.

The participants in the focus group were additionally asked to indicate what they hoped to achieve in their lives in 2022, for example, more than ten years after they had completed their second-level education. Responses from the 19 timelines are as follows:

Working Full-time in a "Good" job	8
Running Their Own Business	4
Having a Family	7
Buying or Building a House	5
Getting Married	4
Making Money ("Plenty")	2
Studying and Researching Abroad	1

In comparison to their responses to the four to five year timeframe after completion of the senior cycle, the JCSP graduate participants' indications of their aspirations for their lives a decade after second-level education focus predominantly on establishing positive careers and domestic development. Lifelong learning is not highlighted in their responses, but because this variable was beyond the remit of the research study, the instrument did not provide participants with a specific opportunity to identify their views on this issue.

4.0 Discussion of Findings and Conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to determine whether a professionally staffed school library can have a longitudinal impact on the educational aspirations, experiences and outcomes of adolescents in Ireland who attend schools that are located in "disadvantaged" communities. In order to resolve this question, the study endeavoured to measure variables related to JCSP students' educational outcomes, whole person development and aspirations for the future. From a comparison of the data gathered from the range of quantitative and qualitative instruments used in this study, a number of consistent findings emerged through this methodological triangulation.

It is clear from the data that the presence of a professionally staffed library has had a meaningful impact on the educational experiences of and outcomes for the majority of JCSP students. Through their consistent immersion in a library programme during the junior cycle, students generally developed their literacy skills. Perhaps more importantly, the data from both the students themselves as well as the adults, demonstrates that these students, having engaged in library classes and activities in the three years of their junior cycle, are confident about their skills and see themselves as readers. An unexpected finding from the student questionnaire was the number of respondents who indicated that they used the public library as well as their school library. As one librarian observed, establishing library use as an integral component of their school experience enables young people to form a different view of the role of formal information services in their lives.

There was agreement amongst the adults that since the implementation in 2002 of the Library Project, examination results for JCSP students had steadily improved. The majority of students similarly indicated that they had been pleased with their examination results. It follows that this tangible symbol of achievement will impact on the individual's self-esteem, confidence, and aspirations for the future. The latter was demonstrated in the students' responses to the questionnaire about their future plans and reinforced by the majority of student maps that depicted ambitious, detailed and rich future time perspectives.

It was the view of the adults that since 2002, the number of JCSP students who stay on in school into the senior cycle has increased. A range of factors was suggested as contributing to this development including elements both within and outside the school community. As with any attempt to investigate a complex phenomenon, it is impossible, in this case, to identify and prove one specific policy, intervention, or trend that has led, in these schools, to more JCSP students continuing their education beyond the junior cycle. Rather it is more likely that the combination of factors has resulted in this development. However, the data, both from the students and the adults, demonstrate that the library project, in a variety of ways, has made a contribution to the increasing number of JCSP students opting to continue in formal education into senior cycle and beyond. One result of this trend is that the schools, all with different approaches, are currently engaged in exploring how best to meet the needs of the JCSP graduates once they progress into the senior cycle.

It was clear from the adults that students who came through the junior cycle with the supports and interventions of the JCSP, frequently experience difficulty, particularly with the absence of a Transition Year, in the first year of the senior cycle. It was stated that while the number of students entering the senior cycle has increased, there are many who do not complete the course, leaving school during or at the end of fifth year. The schools are all working to explore different ways in which to address this problem and to provide programmes and supports that will help students to gain similar experiences of achievement in school as they did when in the JCSP. To varying degrees, the libraries in these schools continue to play a role in the educational experiences of past JCSP students. While the data from the students' questionnaire indicate that many JCSP graduates continue to use the library regularly, the adults were in agreement that there is a need for growth in this area. Acknowledging that the library's primary role is, and should continue to be, enhancing the educational experience of JCSP students in the junior cycle, the adults concurred that, as a resource, the library needs to serve all members of the school community. The ways in which the individual libraries have, and continue to, address this challenge depend to a great extent on the particularities of their settings, i.e., physical environment, timetabling, staffing, etc. The librarians who participated in this study are all actively engaged in experimenting with a range of different strategies to meet the needs of their JCSP graduates.

The evidence from this study demonstrates that innovative programmes and interventions, such as the JCSP Demonstration Library Project, have contributed to the elevation of students' educational outcomes and aspirations. In consolidating and building upon the foundation laid by the libraries during the past five years, it is important to envisage a next phase in its development. The literacy skills developed in the libraries during their junior cycle, assisted JCSP students in the successful completion of their Junior Certificate. The role the school library can play in teaching students information literacy skills, particularly as they move on into the senior cycle, is one that can make a very meaningful contribution to the lifelong learning experience of JCSP graduates well into their futures.

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Appendix A - Information Letter (to JCSP Co-ordinator)

Dear

RE: JCSP Demonstration Library Project Research

As you are aware the research dimension of the library project has been ongoing since 2002. The librarians' monthly reports, group reading assessments, and most recently, the administration of the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability with First Year JCSP students, contribute to the documentation and analysis of the multifaceted impact of the libraries on students as first illustrated in Room for Reading (2005).

It is clear from the statistical and anecdotal data in the librarians' monthly reports that students in most schools continue to use and benefit from the resources provided by the libraries beyond their experience of the Junior Certificate. A number of students who participated in the original Room for Reading research are now continuing their studies in the Senior Cycle. The library research has been focused exclusively on students during the Junior Cycle. The longitudinal, long-term impact of the libraries has not been formally assessed. To analyse the contribution JCSP libraries may be making to students throughout their secondary school experience, a small-scale research project in the library schools is proposed. The project will be completed before the end of the term in March 2007.

In planning the project, I have tried to keep to a minimum the time needed from all participants. All aspects of the research will be conducted on school premises at the convenience of participants, school staff and administration. The project is comprised of the following three stages:

1. **Group Reading Tests administered to enrolled JCSP graduates and completion by students of a short questionnaire.**
   The GRTs will be sent to the librarian at your school. The questionnaire is designed to derive students' attitudes and experiences of the libraries as well as their educational aspirations. Completion should take no longer than 15 minutes.

   I will ask the librarian to schedule a convenient time for the school when I can meet with the students in order to distribute the questionnaire. At that time I will describe to the students the nature of the second stage of the project and ask for an indication of who would be willing to participate. Students who do volunteer will additionally be provided with information letters and consent forms for their parents/guardians.

2. **Focus group and individual timelines (with students)**
   The second stage of the research will commence in February. Two focus groups (three students in each) will be asked to create a map or diagram reflecting their concepts of the future. Following the group work, the six students will be asked to individually complete a brief educational timeline presenting both memorable events during their Junior Cycle as well as their hopes for the future.

   Total time for completion of this stage of the project:

   Focus Groups (2 groups x 30 minutes)…………………….1 hour
   Educational timelines (6 students x 20 minutes)………… 2 hours

3. **Semi-structured interviews**
   The last stage of the research will be semi-structured interviews with the principal, yourself and the librarian at your school. Individual interviews should be approximately 30 minutes at a time that is convenient for the interviewee. I will provide interviewees with informed consent forms prior to the date of the interviews.

In conclusion I would like to emphasise that, in accordance with ethical research guidelines, I will not personally identify you, staff members, or students in research reports or other publications ensuing from the work. Individual participants in both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

I have sent a letter of information to the principal of your school and have been in contact with your librarian about the project. If you have any questions or wish to discuss the proposed study in greater detail, please feel free to contact me by phone xxxxxxxxx or by email at xxxxxxxxx

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time.

Appendix B - Student Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to

(a) measure Senior Cycle students' use of the school library
(b) Gain students' views on their experience of school and their plans for the future.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following:

1. I am ❑ Female
❑ Male

2. I am in ❑ 4th Year
❑ 5th Year
❑ 6th Year

3. I like reading ❑ a lot
❑ a little
❑ not at all

4. I like to read ❑ every day
❑ every week
❑ every month
❑ sometimes
❑ never

5. My reading is ❑ excellent
❑ good
❑ okay
❑ could be better

6. Do you ever visit a public library? ❑ a lot
❑ sometimes
❑ never

7. How often do you use the school library? ❑ every day
❑ every week
❑ every month
❑ less often
❑ never

8. Do you use the library more now than when you were in Years 1-3? ❑ more often
❑ less often
❑ about the same

9. Do you borrow books from the library? ❑ often
❑ sometimes
❑ never

10. What types of books do you borrow? ❑ fiction
❑ non-fiction
❑ both
❑ don't borrow

11. What other library resources have you used this year?

- ❏ computers
- ❏ newspapers
- ❏ dictionaries
- ❏ magazines
- ❏ encyclopaedias
- ❏ atlases
- ❏ dictionaries
- ❏ videos, CDs
- ❏ other

12. Do you use the library in you own time (eg lunchtime, before or after school)?

- ❏ yes
- ❏ no

13. Do you use a computer at home?

- ❏ yes
- ❏ no

14. How often do you use the computers in the library?

- ❏ every day
- ❏ once or more each week
- ❏ a few days each month
- ❏ less often
- ❏ never

15. Tick from the list what you use computers for in the library:

- ❏ preparing & writing assignments/projects
- ❏ email
- ❏ searching for information on Internet
- ❏ playing games
- ❏ search CDs for information
- ❏ other

16. How much do you think you know about using computers?

- ❏ I am an expert
- ❏ I know a lot
- ❏ I know enough to get by
- ❏ I know a little
- ❏ I know nothing at all

17. For the following statements please indicate whether you agree or disagree:

The School Library has…

• helped me get better at reading	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me read more	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me enjoy reading more	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me to read different authors and different types of books	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me to do better school work	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me to do better on exams	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me feel more confident about my school work	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me to be better organised with my homework	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me feel better about finding information	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree
• helped me to think about and make plans for my future	❏ I agree	❏ I disagree

18. Please indicate whether you have found the following aspects of the library helpful to you in your school work and studies:

- Collection of books   ❑ helpful   ❑ not helpful
- Internet access   ❑ helpful   ❑ not helpful
- School Librarian   ❑ helpful   ❑ not helpful
- Resources (neswspapers, magazines, CDs, etc)   ❑ helpful   ❑ not helpful
- Library classes   ❑ helpful   ❑ not helpful
- Library based clubs & activities   ❑ helpful   ❑ not helpful

Please fill in the following:

19. My favourite subject in school is _____

20. My least favourite subject in school is _____

21. In school I am good at _____

22. Outside of studies I am good at _____

23. When I was in Years 1-3, I was happiest in school when

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. When I was in Years 1-3, I was not happy in school when

_____

_____

_____

_____

25. When I got the results of my Junior Certificate exams I was:
- ❑ Happy
- ❑ Pleased with most of my results
- ❑ Pleased with a few of my results
- ❑ Not happy with my results

26. I am studying for the
- ❑ Leaving Certificate
- ❑ Leaving Certificate Vocational
- ❑ Leaving Certificate Applied
- ❑ Other

27. I think I am doing well with my studies this year
- ❑ Doing well
- ❑ Doing okay
- ❑ It could be better

28. When I finish my studies at this school I hope to:
- ❑ go to college or university
- ❑ work full-time
- ❑ work part-time
- ❑ study and work full-time
- ❑ study and work part-time
- ❑ travel
- ❑ study in a foreign country
- ❑ work in a foreign country
- ❑ do volunteer work
- ❑ other

29. Please list any specific goals that you have once you have finished secondary school:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire!
Your help is greatly appreciated!

Appendix C - Phase Two Interview Consent Forms

Dear

As detailed in past correspondence, I have initiated a research project for the Junior Certificate School Programme to be completed this term. The purpose of the research is to evaluate the long-term impact of school libraries on students' progress. My study involves interviews with teachers, librarians and principals in JCSP schools as well as work with students who have completed their Junior Certificate and have now entered the Senior Cycle of their secondary school education.

At the conclusion of the work with students I would like to conduct interviews with yourself and your colleagues. The interviews will focus primarily on the impact of the library on a range of variables including students' academic progress, whole person development, and future aspirations. I will not identify you, other members of staff or students specifically in the research report or any ensuing publications of the work. Participation in the study is voluntary and would only take place upon receipt of your written consent. Participants may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions or wish to obtain further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at xxxxxxxxxx or by email at xxxxxxxxxx

Thank you for your time.

Appendix D - Letter of Consent for Participation in the Study

This study is intended to evaluate the long-term impact of school libraries on students' progress. Participation in the study is voluntary. There are no physical or psychological risks associated with this study.

I, _____, have read and understood the Letter of Information provided to me by xxxxxx, and I agree to participate in the research project. I understand that all my answers will be used for the purposes of this study only and that all responses I provide will identify neither the school, my employer, nor myself.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E - Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

1. Focusing particularly on your JCSP students, would you say that there has been an improvement in their school exam and Junior Certificate exam results, with the introduction and development of the school library since 2002?

2. To the best of your knowledge has there been a noticeable change in the number of students who stay on to complete their Junior Certificate since the introduction of the school library?

3. Approximately how many JCSP graduates are currently enrolled in the Senior Cycle? Would they be enrolled in the Leaving Cert, LCA or LCVP?

4. Has the retention rate for JCSP graduates into the Senior Cycle improved since 2002? Do you believe that the presence of a school library with a professional librarian has contributed to JCSP student retention rates? If so, in what ways?

5. In your opinion, is the transition to Senior Cycle difficult for JCSP graduates? If so, in what ways? What does the school do to assist students in this transition?

6. Does having a professional librarian in the school make a difference in this transition? If so, could you explain how the librarian contributes to this transition?

7. How does the library support work in the JCSP and the Senior Cycle?

8. How does the library fit in with the rest of the school's programs and activities?

9. What aspects of your school library do you think should be highlighted in the research?

10. What works particularly well in the library?

11. Has the library improved over time? If so, how? In your opinion, are there areas that would benefit from additional work and attention?

12. How would you like to see the library evolve in the years ahead?

13. What does the library need in order to continue to develop (ex. more books, more computers, cross-curricular links, etc.)?

14. Are there any barriers that might prevent the library's development (ex funding, personnel, timetabling)?

15. What do you think students, and JCSP graduates particularly, would say about the library? Have you heard students talk about the library?

16. Have there been any unanticipated benefits for students and/or staff from having a professionally staffed library in your school?

17. Can you recall a time when you noticed how the library hand an impact on one of your students?

18. Do you believe that the work of the school librarian and the presence of a school library have had an impact on JCSP graduates' educational and career-related goals? If so, in what ways?

19. From the following list, rank in numerical order the group to whom the library makes the most important contribution (1 - most important, etc)

    _____ Incoming First Year students

    _____ Junior Cycle students

    _____ Senior Cycle students

    _____ Staff

    _____ Parents

    _____ Community

Thank you for your time and contributions to this research study.

Appendix F - Parental Consent Letter

23rd February 2007

Dear Parents/Guardians

Since the beginning of 2007, I have been conducting a research project for the Junior Certificate School Programme. The purpose of the research is to evaluate the long-term impact of school libraries on students' academic progress. My study involves interviews with teachers, librarians, and principals in JCSP schools as well as work with students who have completed their Junior Certificate and have now entered the Senior Cycle of their secondary school education.

The research with students will consist of a 30-minute group exercise followed by each participant completing an individual timeline describing their experiences of the Junior Certificate as well as their plans for the future. It is anticipated that the timeline should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. All work will be conducted at school, during school hours, and at a time that will be convenient both for the students and their teachers. I have given all students an Information Leaflet describing the purpose of the research and what participation in the study will involve. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary and would only take place upon receipt of your written permission (please see attached form which can be returned by your child to the school librarian). The students participating in the study will not be identified by name in any publication of the work.

If you have any questions or wish to obtain further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at xxxxxxxxxx or by email at xxxxxxxxxx

Thank you for your time.

Appendix F - Parental Consent Letter

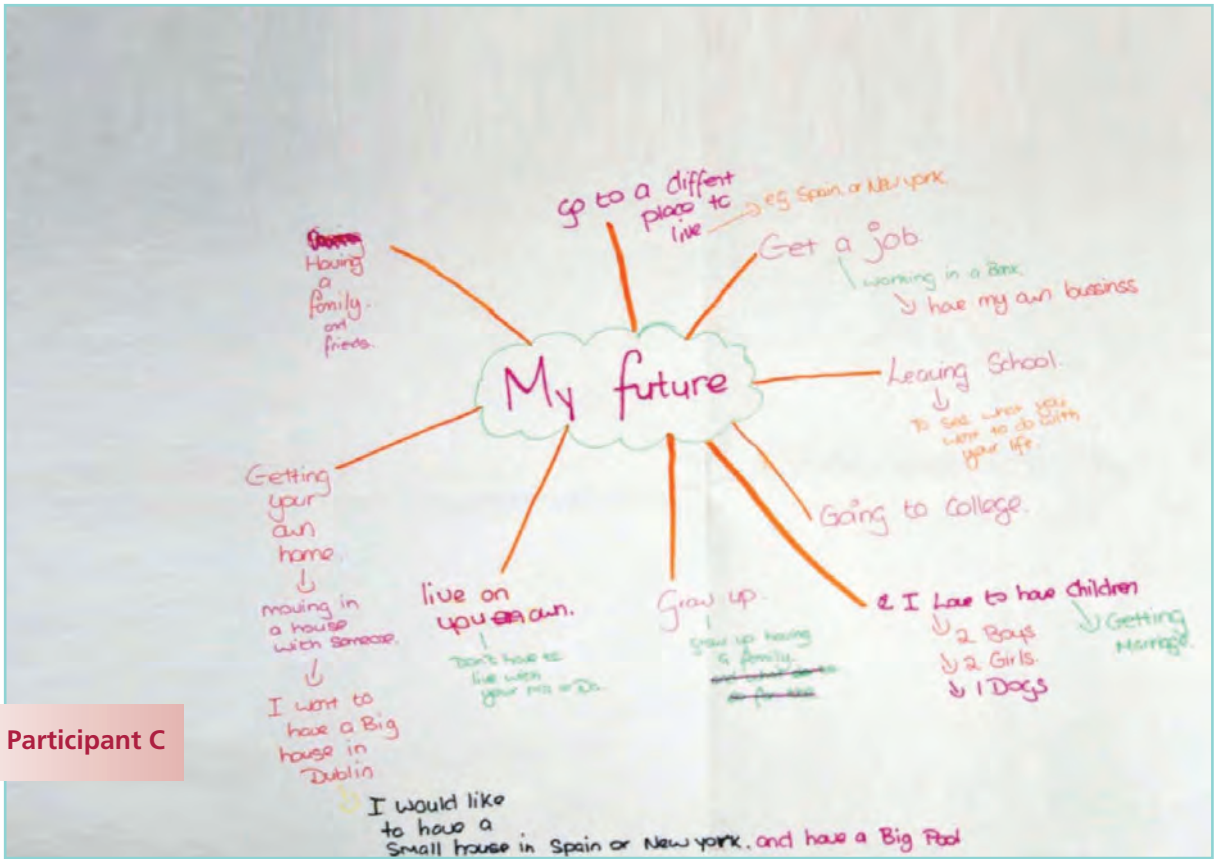## Appendix G - Letter of Permission for Participation in the Study

This study is intended to evaluate the long-term impact of school libraries on students' academic progress. Participation in the study is voluntary. The research will be conducted at your child's school during school hours. There are no physical or psychological risks associated with this study.

I, _____ , parent/guardian of _____ ,
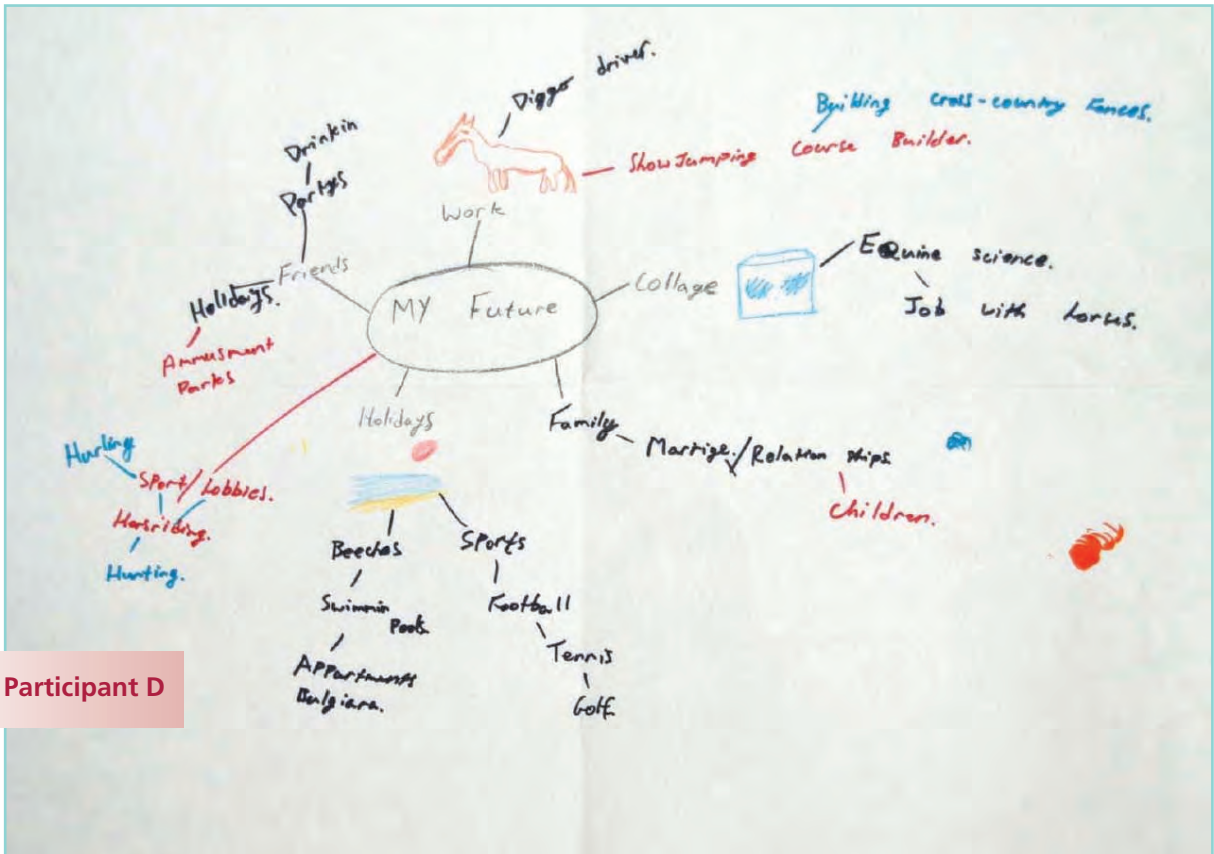
(student's name)

Have read and understood the Letter of Information provided to me by xxxxxx, and I give permission for my child's participation in the research project. I understand that all information obtained during the research will be used for the purposes of this study only and that my child will not be identified by name in any written document.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H - Personal Timelines

Participant A

Participant B

Participant C

Participant D

Participant E

My Future

- Drive around
- I am still in school
- Drive
- House
  - then a big one
  - Small house in the start
- get married — Family (3son)
- Pilot Flying For big company's — owning My Aircraft
- Flying
- Cars — nice cars — big and powerful (gt 500)
- Jobs
  - Working in John Hearns
  - Money
    - Flying and Drive
    - leave Jh
    - work for a compan Flying.
- Aircraft tech
- Army aircraft tech
- Air corp
- Collage
- Computer Tech
- own Shop — Work for Intel or dell — help design and new computer

Participant F

My Future

- Style
  - No Hair!
  - Short Hair
  - Long hair
  - Old!
- clothes designer
  - Armani
  - versace
  - D&G
  - Tommy hilfiger
  - CK
- Family
  - mam a dad
  - children
  - Brother
  - Sisters
  - wife — children
  - girlfriend — children — pets — dogs — Horses pony's.
  - children — god children
  - construction — Design — Big houses
    - carpentry
- JOBS
  - Equine studies — Horse Ridding
  - Show jumping — Training young Horses
- Driving
- Cars
  - past my Leaving Certificate
  - Honda civic
  - mercedes Benz — S-class
  - Bentley
  - Rollse Royce
  - Bugatti version
- Intrests — music — Christina Aguilera — Dirrty!
  - Horse Ridding
  - Movies — Horror
- HOME — own house — hopefully Big house! — pool — Jacuzzi
  - 5 Bedrooms.
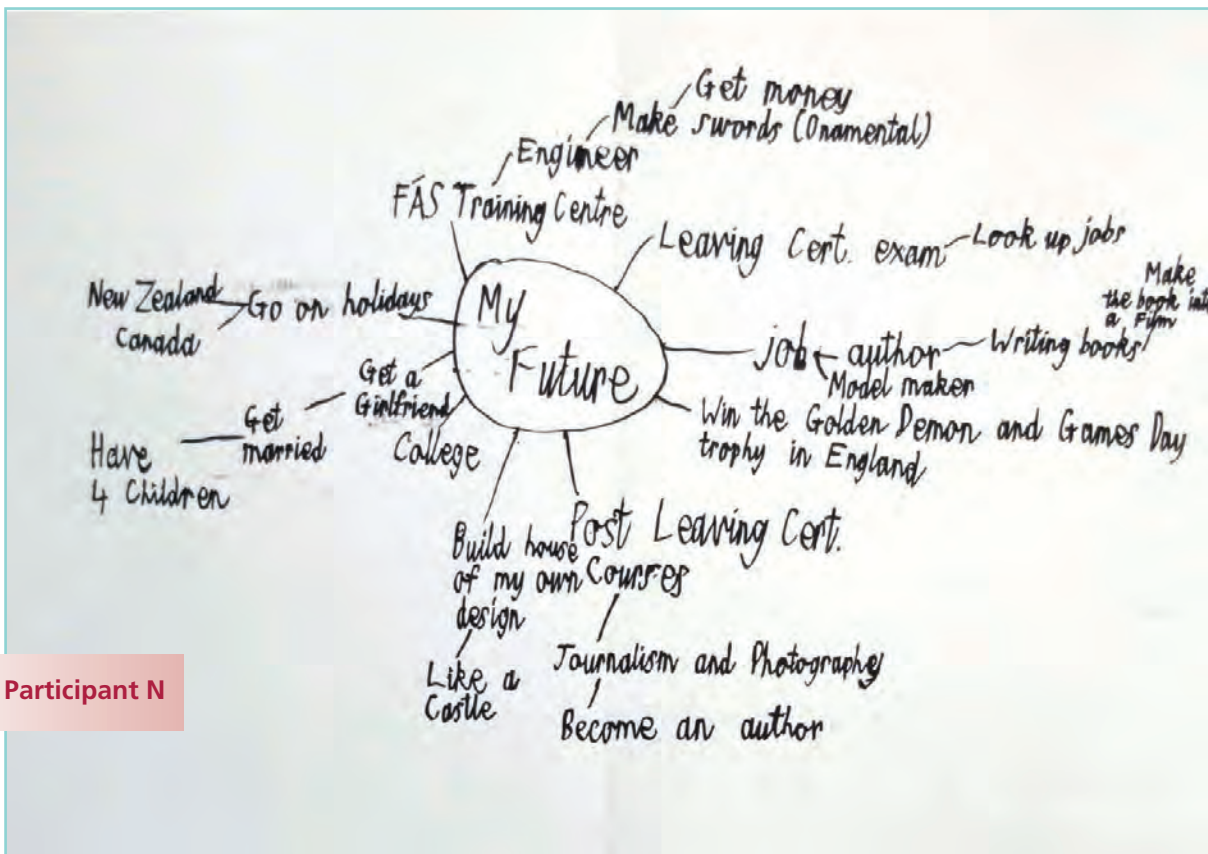- inheritance

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Participant G

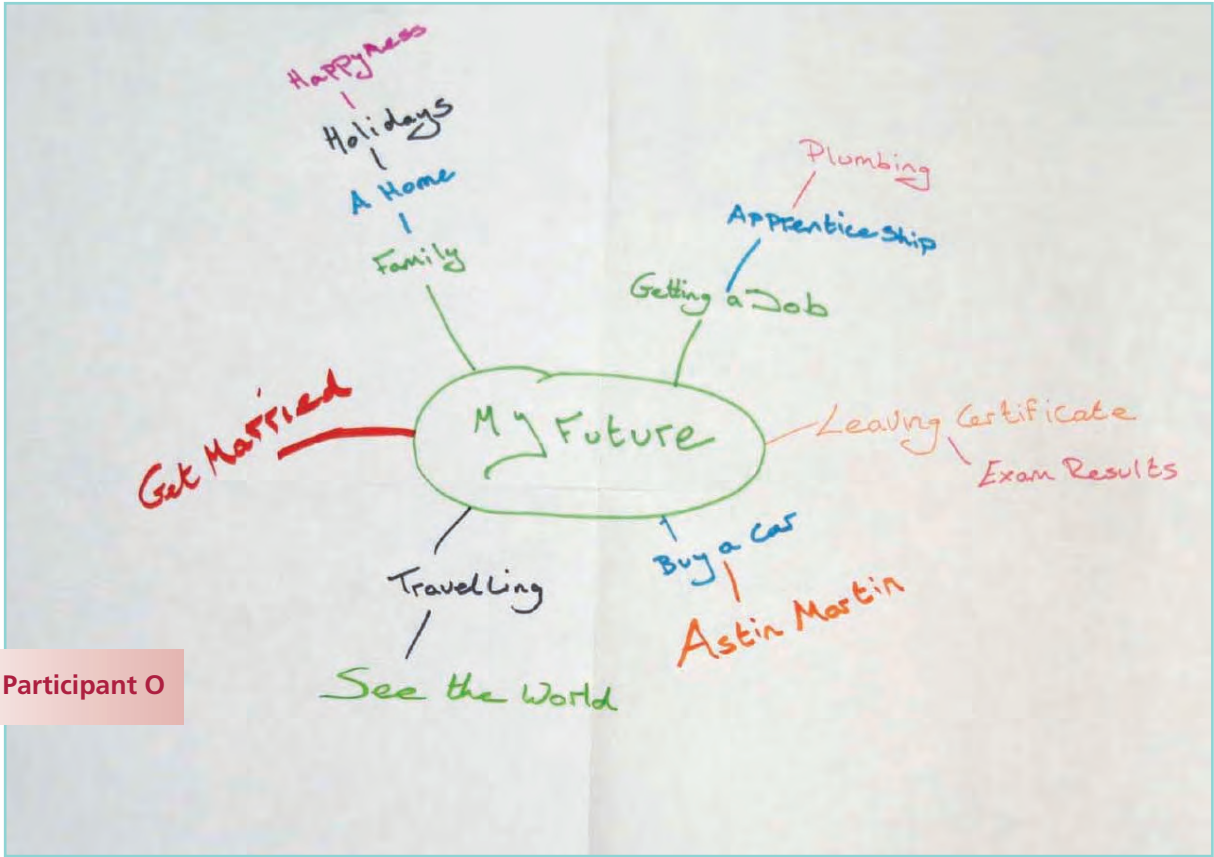

Participant H

Participant I
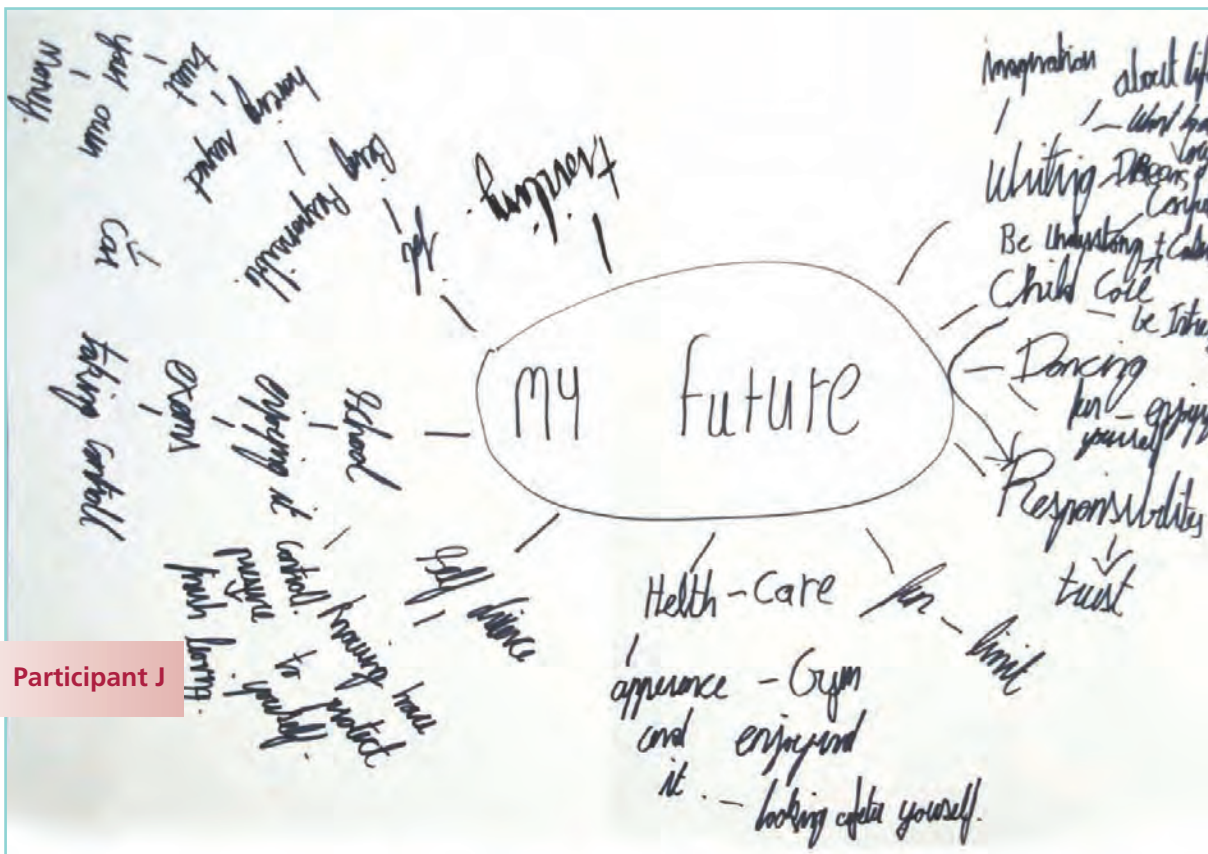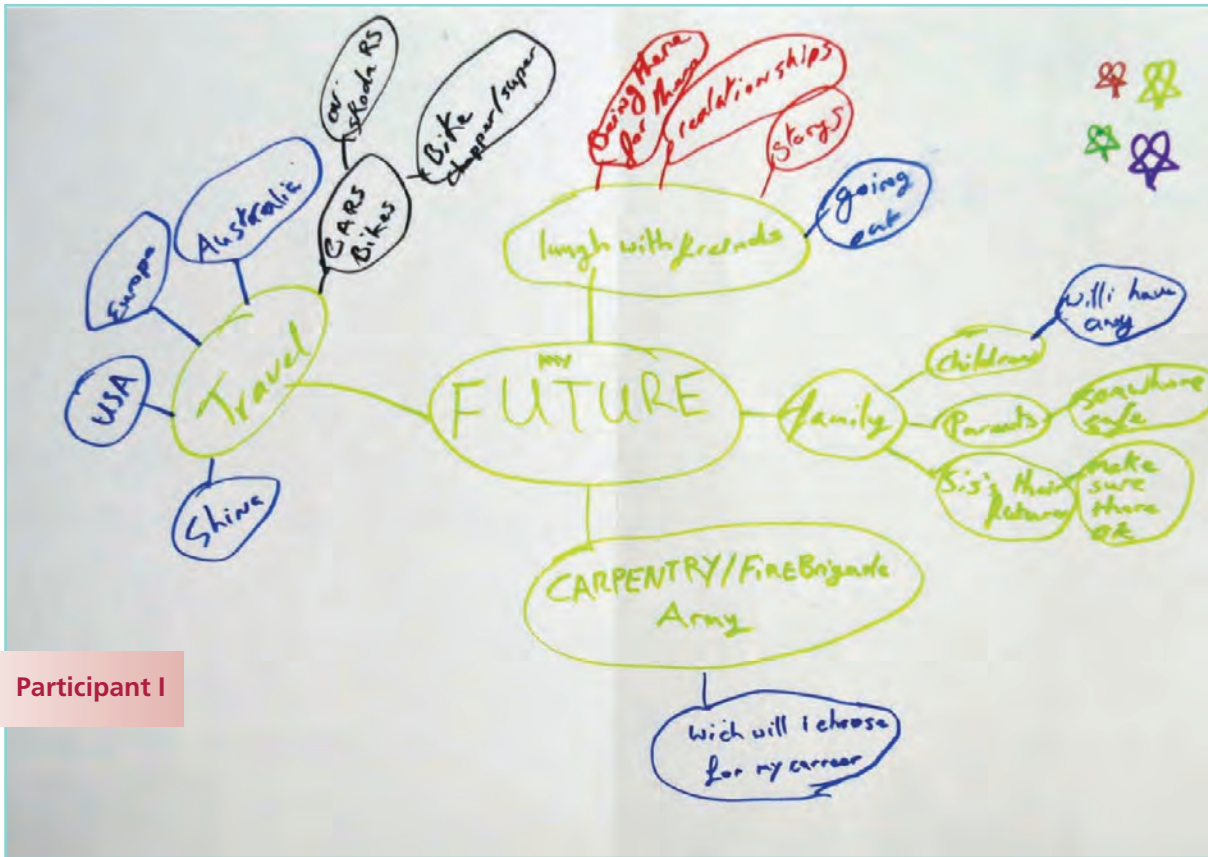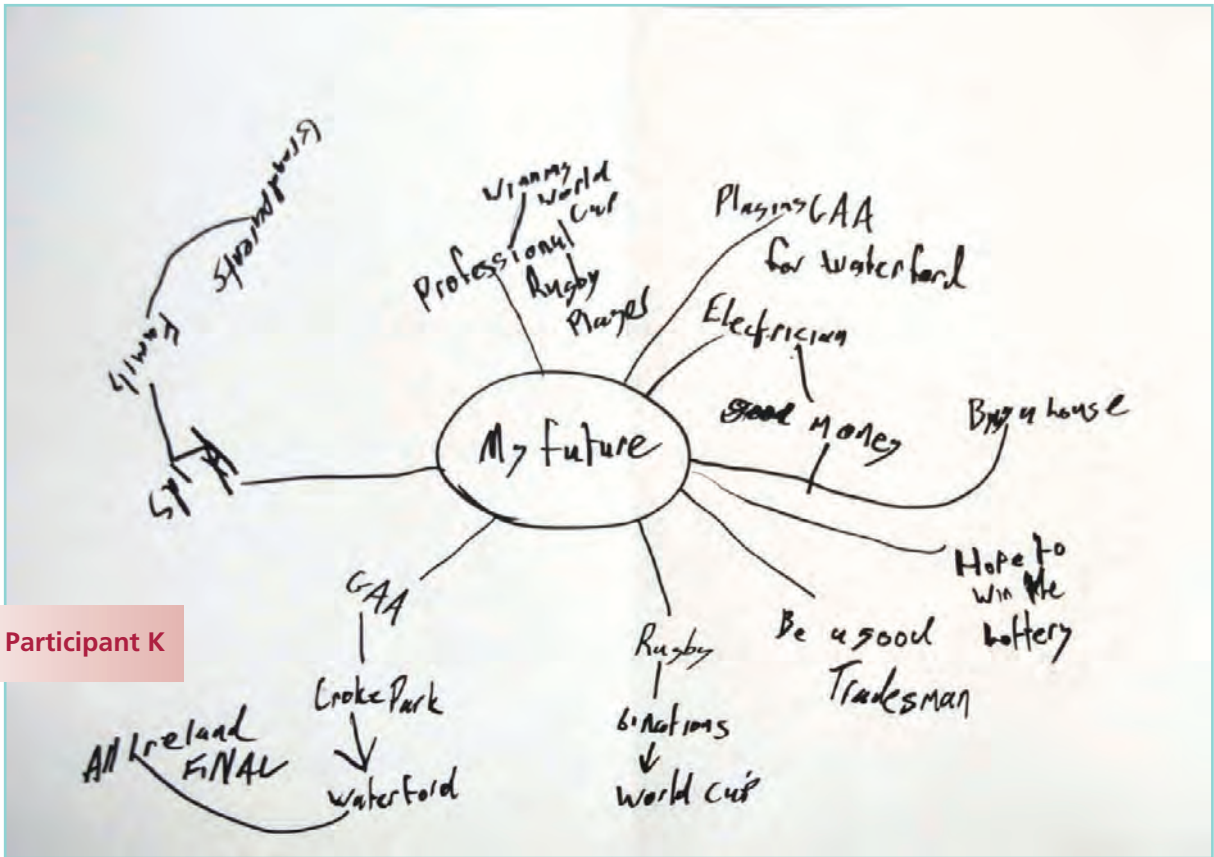
Participant J
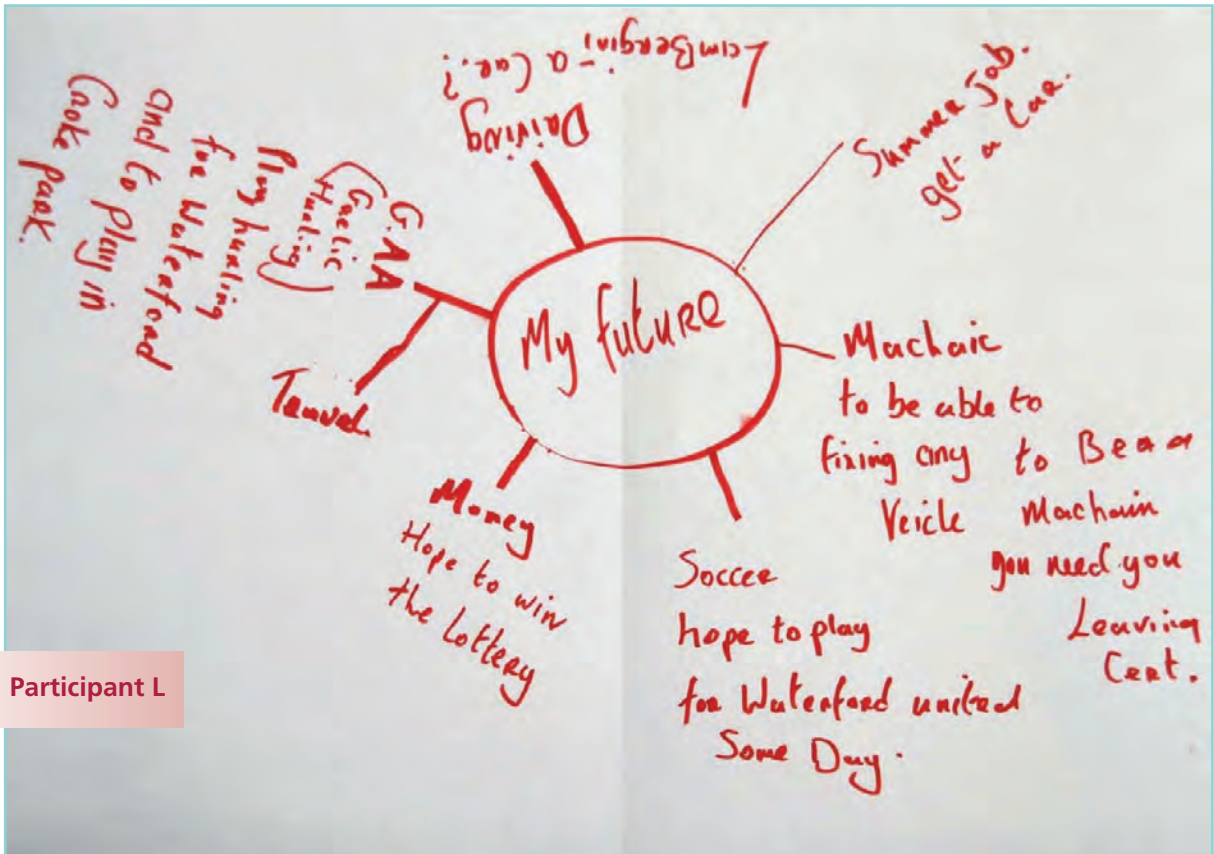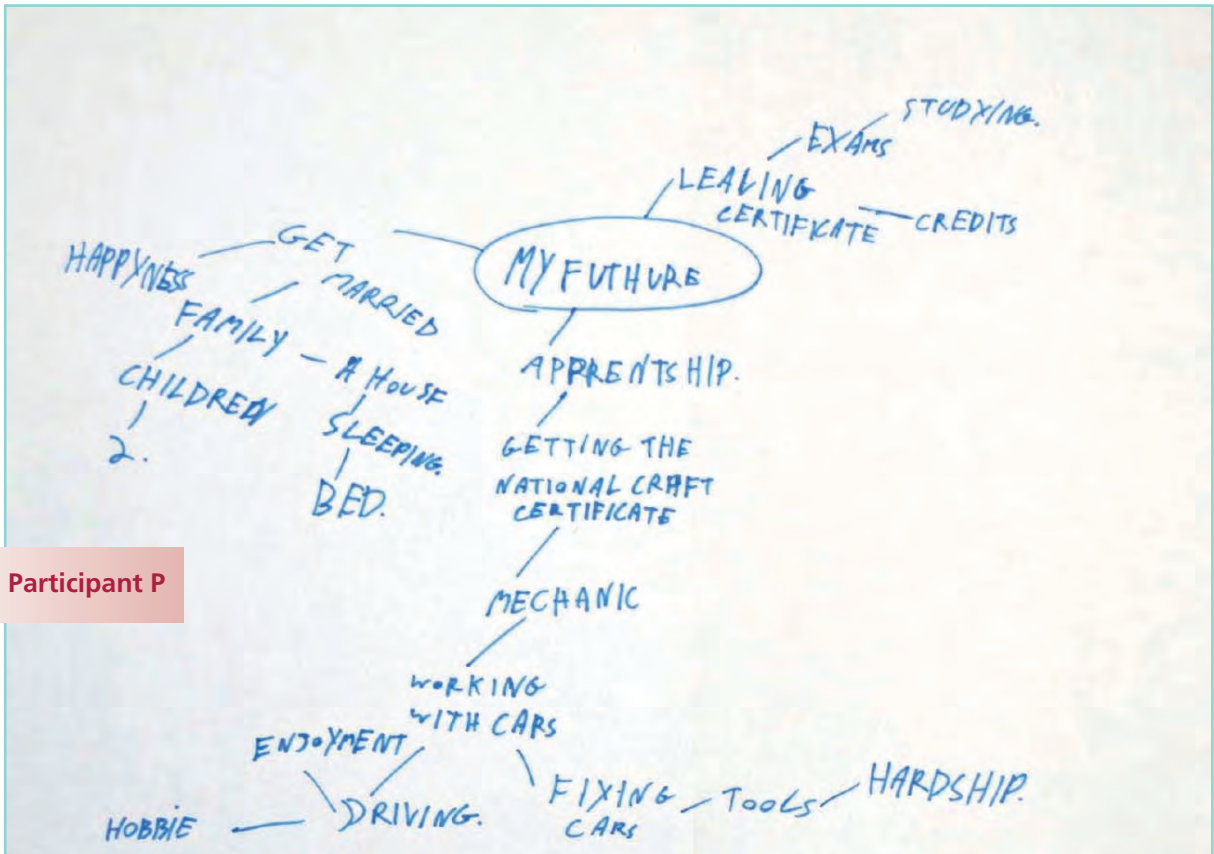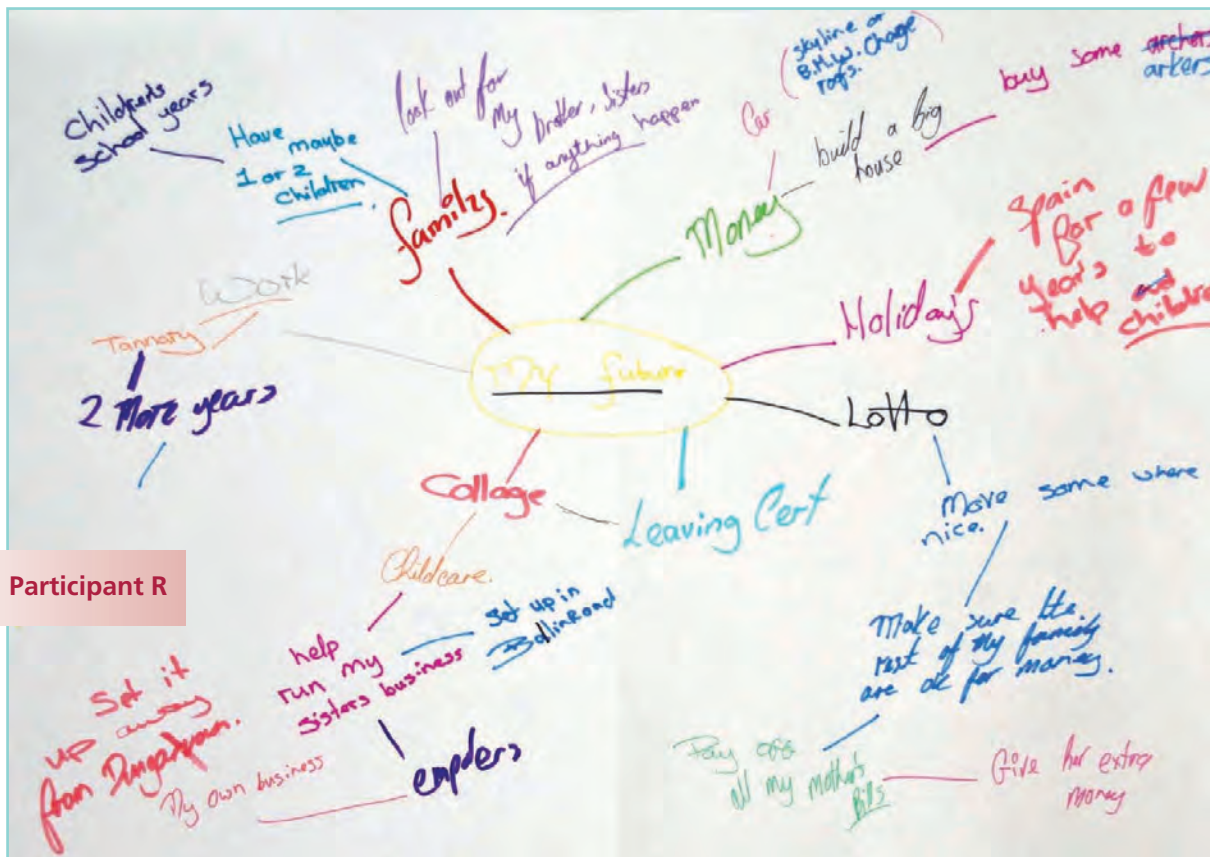
Participant K

Participant L

Participant M
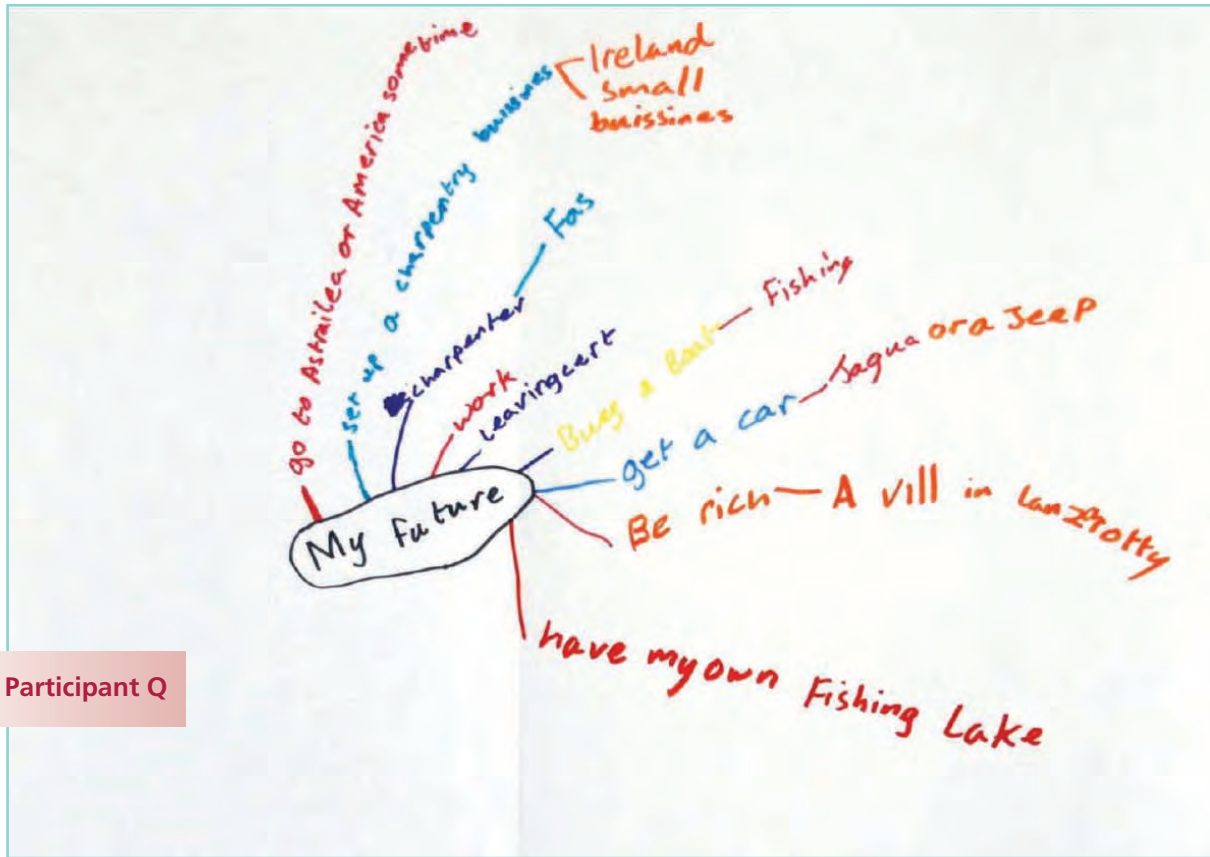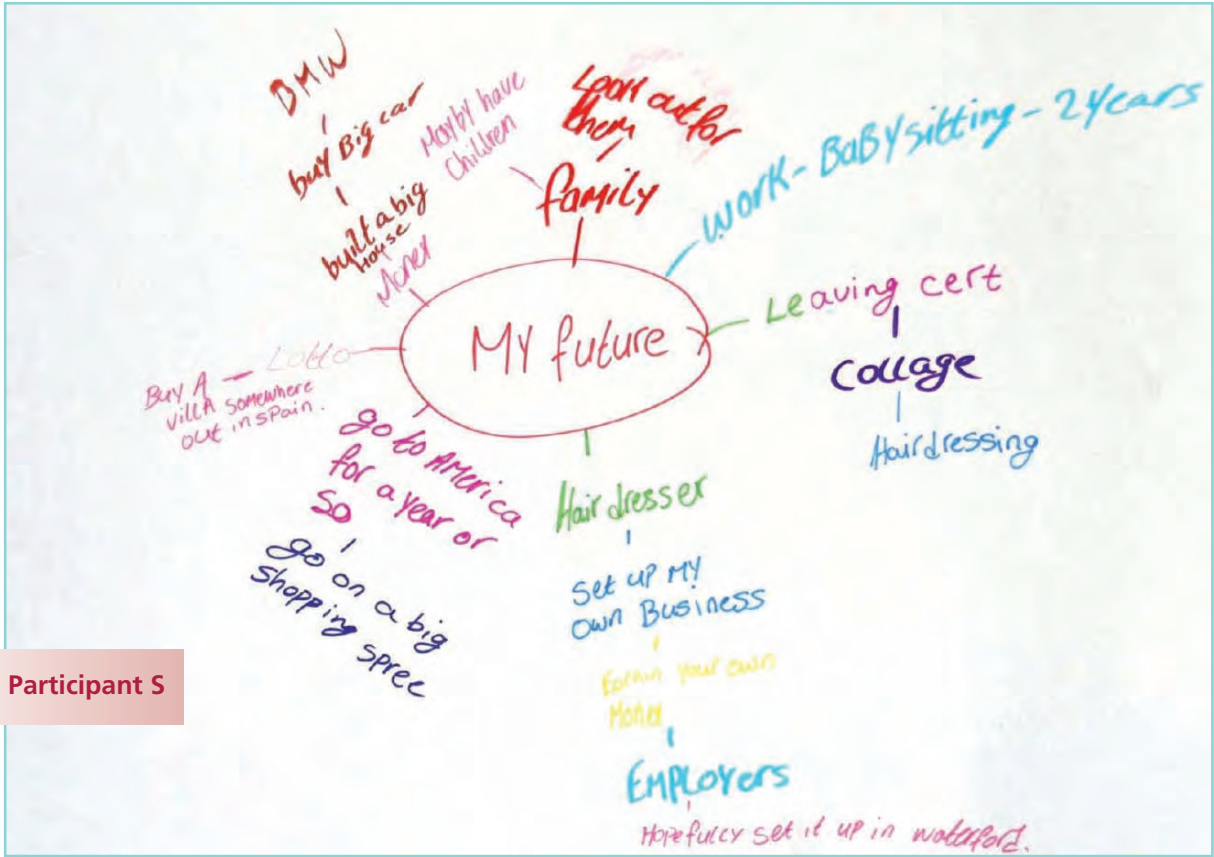

Participant N

Participant O

Participant P

Participant Q

Participant R

Participant S