

**Transformative learning through a  
youth enrichment programme –  
In search of *Talisman***

by

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## SUMMARY

All human beings are endowed with unique talents and potentialities, and are able to bring to life the hidden gifts or the *talisman* within them. Being in the prime of their lives, youth should be engaged in developing themselves, acquiring virtues, and striving for excellence. Reports from schools and other sources, however, indicate that many South African youth have become prey to various social ills, such as teenage pregnancy, violence, crime, and drugs and alcohol abuse, which inhibit them from achieving their *talisman*.

In response to this situation, a life skills programme was designed to awaken the sense of *talisman* in youth. Believing that all human beings are gifted with special talents and potentialities, the Youth Enrichment Programme (YEP) aims to improve and transform the cognitive, social, and moral behaviour of youth, thus bringing them closer to the state of *talisman*. The programme intends to equip youth with values and skills that improve their social, moral and cognitive behaviour, so that they can become responsible citizens in a united and peaceful society. It pays special attention to the moral and spiritual aspects of the learners, aspects severely neglected by most education systems.

The principles of YEP are founded on the spiritual nature of man, the oneness of mankind, unity in diversity, and equality. The programme adopts transformational and multi-domain teaching strategies to transform learners through interactive critical assessment of values in the context of real-life moral and social issues.

The main purpose of this study was to analyse and evaluate YEP in terms of its influence on the cognitive, social, and moral behaviour of adolescent learners and to determine its strengths and weaknesses. Various aspects of the programme were investigated, including its underlying theoretical principles, methodological approaches and design characteristics.

The researcher evaluated the influence of the programme on the behaviour of adolescent learners in five institutions in two provinces. The qualitative and quantitative data from the learners, teachers and facilitators in the five case studies showed that the programme had a positive influence on the learners in the cognitive, social and moral domains. It broadened their view of life and developed problem solving skills in the cognitive domain, enhanced their communication skills and co-operation in social domain, and improved their general moral behaviour especially in the areas of trust and respect in the moral domain. Overall, the effect of the programme was most prominent in transforming the moral behaviour of the learners, bringing some of them closer to their state of *talisman*.

The study also discovered three unexpected phenomena – the beneficial role of peer learning facilitation, the positive effect of facilitation on the young facilitators, and the salutary effect of the programme on the general learning atmosphere in the schools.

**Key words:** youth, talisman, transformative learning, social domain, moral domain, spiritual domain, cognitive domain, emotional domain, multi-domain teaching strategies, life skills

## DEDICATION

This humble endeavour is dedicated to all:  
The youth who are struggling in the darkness in search for light;  
Those educators and adults who in spite of all odds serve the youth day by day,  
tirelessly;  
Those who believe in dreams and work hard to make them come true;  
Those who believe in humanity and serve it;  
Those who believe in the *Supreme Talisman* in people.

May we all be able to fulfil the purpose for which we were created, and when our  
time is up that we stand in front of Him with our heads held high.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
CSIR	Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research
DoE	Department of Education
DoSS	Department of Social Security
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAPA	South African Press Association
WHO	World Health Organisation
YEP	Youth Enrichment Programme