

In search of talisman: the design

Chapter Five

THE DESIGN OF YEP

5.1 Introduction

Many programmes claim to adhere to sound theoretical principles. However, what makes a programme stand out from the others is the way in which the theories are translated into design and are implemented in practice. The intricate combination of practice and theory in YEP reveals answers to the question:

How do the design structure and features of YEP relate to the theoretical and methodological principles?

This chapter examines the design features of YEP and their relevance to theoretical and methodological principles. Subsequently, a sample theme from the YEP curriculum will be analysed to demonstrate the practice theory approach. The analysis will concentrate on:

- the structure of the curriculum;
- the structure of the themes;
- the learning domains;
- the implementation techniques;
- the transformational design patterns;
- the YEP triangle of role-players;
- YEP's special features; and
- a sample theme.

5.2 The structure of the YEP curriculum

YEP consists of 39 themes on various social, moral, philosophical, and personal development topics. The themes are arranged in seven sections, and sections are arranged in sequence. General topics are placed at the beginning – for example, the theme on “Importance of Education” is followed by more sensitive topics such as “Peer Pressure” and then with personal topics such as “Tests and Difficulties”. The reason for such sequencing is that the general topics are considered to be easier for young people to talk about, whereas talking openly about sensitive topics such as “Child Abuse” or “Alcohol Abuse” might be more difficult to handle. This is especially true in cases where the learners themselves are exposed to or are experiencing such problems. Moreover, more time is needed for learners to get to know one another and to establish the trust, which is necessary for open communication.

As far as the topics and the content of the curriculum is concerned, some of the themes directly address the South African youth problematique (process of healing) – for example “Alcohol Abuse”, “Drug Abuse”, “AIDS” – and other themes are meant to enrich the youth generally (process of building). Thus the principles of healing and building are considered in the design of the curriculum.

5.3 The structure of the themes

Analysing the structure of the YEP themes reveals a pattern, which seems to be the vehicle through which learning takes place:

- Section A: questions and posing the problem;
- Section B: expression of ideas and discussion; and
- Section C: evaluation of quotations.

The design of each section will be analysed independently in order to indicate how the transformational methodologies and multi-domain teaching strategies are translated and implemented in the structure of the themes.

5.3.1 Section A: questions and posing the problem

Section A of all themes contains two phases:

- the question phase; and
- the reflection phase.

5.3.1.1 phase one: the questions

A series of interrelated and life-oriented questions and stories about moral, philosophical, and social topics are provided in Section A of each theme. In most cases, the questions are interrelated and, like the events of a story, follow one another. The following types of questions are incorporated in Section A:

- Systematic and interrelated questions guide learners from simple to complex, easy to difficult, concrete to abstract, known to unknown, and definition to application. These processes help the learners to develop thinking skills (Briggs, Gustafson & Tillman, 1991:177-8).
- Inductive and deductive questions promote two kinds of reasoning (Behr, 1990:89). Deductive questions involve making generalisations from specific data, and inductive questions involve making specific inferences from general data.
- Higher order and productive questions stimulate critical and independent thinking (Duminy & Steyn, 1987:151).
- Problem stories, moral dilemmas, and controversial topics have also been included. These kinds of questions seek alternative solutions and promote thinking (Harvey & Brown, 1996:73).
- Authentic questions include questions about real-life situations regarding past and present circumstances of South African youth.

The questions presented in Section A of the themes are intended to achieve a number of objectives. Each of the objectives is relevant to certain theoretical and methodological principles (discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this study). The objectives of questions and their relevant theoretical and methodological principles are listed in the Table 5.1.

Table 5.1
Questions in relation to theoretical and methodological principles of YEP

Objective	Theoretical and Methodological Principles
To draw the attention of youth towards a specific problem	Awareness of a problem (first stage in YEP cycle of change)*
To stimulate thinking	(First stage in YEP cycle of change*)
To put a problem in context and make it relevant to the daily life of the youth	Authentic pedagogy
To find alternative solutions to a problem	Assess different solutions and options (Third stage in YEP cycle of change)
To find out about learners' feelings and opinions	Healing Emotional domain development
To find out about facts	Cognitive domain development
To find out about moral views and decisions	Moral domain development
To motivate learners to think about the possible short-term and long-term consequences of their actions	Motivation for change Moral/cognitive domain development (Second stage in YEP cycle of change)

* The YEP cycle of change, which is referred to in this and subsequent tables, is discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.3.6.

5.3.1.2 phase two: the reflection phase

After each question learners are asked to pause and reflect on the question for about one minute. Individual learners are requested to think about their personal views on the questions posed in Section A. This instruction is based on the theoretical principle that every learner has the “ability to solve life problems”(see Chapter 3, section 3.5.2). As Haydon (1997:137) said, “*If people did the thinking appropriately, the answers they came to would be the right answers*”.

The objectives and rationale for the routine exercise of one-minute reflection and their relevant theoretical and methodological principles are listed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2
Reflection in relation to the theoretical and methodological principles of YEP

Objectives	Theoretical and Methodological Principles
To get a chance to think about the questions independently of others and to find solutions	Every learner is noble/has <i>talisman</i> ; every learner should be given an opportunity to learn; every learner is able to identify and solve problems.
To motivate change and to promote deep learning	Prerequisite for change (second stage in the YEP cycle of change)
To focus thinking	To reduce impulsive behaviour
To gain self-knowledge	Self-identity; independent thinking; assess own values and attitudes
To learn about own beliefs and emotions	Healing; emotional domain development
To help with the process of spiritualisation	Spiritual domain development
To encourage universal participation	All must learn.
To promote independent learning	Independent thinking; cognitive domain development

Section A of the themes accommodates individualised and independent thinking as the learners look for answers to the questions.

5.3.2 Section B: expressing ideas and discussions

The second section of each theme uses small group discussions to formulate and share answers to the questions asked in Section A. This section also consists of two phases:

- self-expression; and
- participation in small group discussions.

5.3.2.1 *phase one: self-expression*

After thinking individually about the questions, it is expected of learners in the groups to share individualised and personal answers to the set questions within their groups. All group members are required to give an answer to the same question in turn.

It is assumed that through real-life questions, the curiosity of learners is awakened, and that they are motivated to find answers to the questions and to share views with their peers.

The objectives and rationale for asking individual learners to express their own views on the question, one by one in relation to the theoretical and methodological principles of YEP are shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3
Self-expression in relation to the theoretical and methodological principles of YEP

Objectives	Theoretical and Methodological Principles
To preserve the right of all individuals to voice their views	Democracy; everyone is entitled to own opinion
To start from the experiences of the individual learners	To start from the learner; known to unknown (first stage of change cycle)
To affirm and accept every learner	Honouring the self; nobility and integrity of man
To acknowledge the uniqueness of learners	Uniqueness of learners
To improve self-confidence	Self-confidence

5.3.2.2 *phase 2: small group discussions*

After all members of the group has given their views, then discussions begin; the members of the groups *co-operatively* manipulate the topic at hand. At this point communication becomes multi-directional as members of the groups exchange views, cross-examine ideas, explore issues, and consult on possible solutions to the problem.

Table 5.4 displays the objectives and rationale for small group discussions in relation to the theoretical and methodological principles of YEP.

Table 5.4
Small group discussions in relation to the theoretical and methodological principles of YEP

Objectives	Theoretical and Methodological Principles
To create fellowship	Social domain development
To form circles of friends	Co-operate to realise <i>talisman</i> ; caring; promote rational and affective connection among learners; establish interdependency
To exert positive influence	Divert negative peer pressure into positive pressure
To provide alternative solutions to problems in Section A	Assess various options (third stage in YEP cycle of change)

The use of small group discussions and co-operative learning groups (in the broadest sense) are further motivated by their potential to:

- *improve thinking skills*: In the process of deliberation and clash of ideas, various cognitive skills are practiced, including analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Davidson & O’Leary, 1991:35; Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1995:29). Logical thinking is also promoted (Sharan & Sharan, 1976:7) as the group members try to develop acceptable arguments and reasoning. Summarising, explaining and elaborating one’s ideas facilitate the storage of information in the memory and the retention of this information (Davidson & O’Leary, 1991; Johnson & Smith, 1995).
- *improve tolerance*: Amicable exposure to a variety of views in the group tends to promote tolerance among people of diverse backgrounds (Haydon, 1997:143).
- *provide a positive learning environment*: Working in small groups and co-operative learning is believed to create the kind of learning environment in

which students can develop positive attitudes, as they experience less tension and anxiety (UNESCO, 1977:8).

- *broaden one's perspective*: Ellis and Feldman (1994:158) maintain that cooperative learning “gives students a window into the thought processes of their team members, thus mediating and shaping their own thinking”.
- *improve the emotions and affective state of learners*: When working in cooperative learning groups, students have more freedom to express their emotions (Sharan, 1994:337), which leads to vitality in classroom learning.
- *improve self-esteem*: More than 80 research studies have been conducted since the 1950s on the effects of co-operative learning, competition, and individualistic experiences on self-esteem. These studies have shown that co-operative efforts promote higher self-esteem than the other approaches (Johnson & Johnson, 1995:120). This is significant because self-esteem has an impact on the degree to which students use their intelligence for learning in the classroom and eventually on how they perform (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1979:21). Moreover, this is important for changing the condition of those South African youth who suffer from low self-esteem due to their past experiences (see Chapter Two, section 2.2.1.1).

The purpose of group discussions is not to come to a consensus or to find “the answer” or to arrive at a collective answer to a question. Consensus is neither necessary nor particularly desirable (De Vries and Zan, 1994:173). This is because consensus often requires group agreement at the expense of individual differences and varying individual experiences and needs (Watson & Ashton, 1995:88). The purpose, rather, is diverse learning and enriching one another. Therefore, consensus is appreciated only if the group arrives at it naturally and not out of compulsion or routine. Moreover, many of the questions and topics of the discussions raised in Section A of the themes are affective topics that may need more than one answer.

Discussions in the small groups move individual learners from the personal level of learning to the next level of learning – that is, learning from the group.

5.3.3 Section C: evaluation of quotations

At the end of each theme, learners are presented with a few quotations related to the topic of the theme. Believing in the spiritual unity of religions and their spiritual message (the Golden Rules), quotations from different religions are used in order to inspire the learners spiritually. The multi-faith approach to the selection of the quotations is based on the notion that it is important for the learners to have the opportunity to look across value systems and cultures, to respect other people's beliefs and practices (Brown & Brown, 1999:24), and to look at common or universal values. Moreover, some quotations from philosophers have also been included.

The members of groups – individually or as a group – reflect, discuss, and assess the quotations.

The objectives for using quotations and their theoretical and methodological principles are listed in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5
Evaluation of quotations in relation to the theoretical and methodological principles of YEP

Objectives	Theoretical and Methodological Principles
To broaden learners' perspective	Cognitive domain development
To inspire and uplift learners morally and spiritually	Moral/spiritual domain development
To stimulate thinking	Motivation; assess various options (second, third, and fourth stages in YEP cycle of change)
To reflect on universal spiritual and moral values	Moral/spiritual domain development
To remind the learners about their <i>talisman</i>	Nobility and integrity of man

It should be noted that the quotations in Section C are viewed as food for thought and not as “the answer” to the questions in Section A. Moreover, both learners

and facilitators are encouraged to bring quotations and readings relevant to the YEP themes to the class, and thus add a personal touch to the process.

Reaching this stage, which is the last part of each theme, various groups may share their answers to the questions with the whole class for further discussion. However, no single solution or answer is sought, and individual learners are given the final responsibility to decide on a solution or an answer that suits their personal conditions. However, what is important is that the advantages and disadvantages of various options are explored and presented to the learners.

5.4 The learning domains

Even though the learning outcomes of YEP are formulated according to three domains – cognitive, moral and social – an analytical study of YEP’s curriculum shows that in fact five domains of learning are addressed. They are:

- transformatory cognitive domain;
- transformatory social domain;
- transformatory moral domain;
- transformatory emotional domain; and
- transformatory spiritual domain.

Each of these is discussed below. The domains and the strategies used to achieve them are shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6
YEP domains and the relevant strategies

Domain	Strategy/Method of Achievement
Cognitive	Regular reflection; higher-order questions; problem solving
Social	Small group discussions; social topics
Moral	Dilemmas; moral questions; learning about own and others' values; ground rules
Emotional	Self-knowledge; self-expression; discussion
Spiritual	Reflection; soul-searching questions; quotations; ground rules

5.4.1 Transformatory cognitive domain

In YEP the development of cognitive skills is viewed holistically in the context of the development of all domains. The purpose of developing cognitive skills is to apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills to real-life situations.

In order to develop cognitive skills, the programme uses reflection, higher order questions, and solving hypothetical and life-oriented problems. As learners are cognitively challenged on issues that matter to them, they become intensely involved in the cognitive process. The transformatory cognitive process used in YEP is in line with Behr's (1990:91) model of cognitive learning (also referred in Chapter 4 section 4.4.2.3), which can be summarised in the following steps:

- identifying and understanding the problem;
- search and exploration;
- formulation of a plan or hypothesis; and
- action.

5.4.2 Transformatory social domain

Communication is the core of the social skills taught in YEP. It is used not only to satisfy the social needs of learners for normal functioning in the classroom, but also as a strategy for healing the wounds resulting from social ailments.

The aim of developing social skills, therefore, is to promote unity, understanding, and harmony among learners so that the youth themselves help each other to cope with social ills. The programme promotes a sense of solidarity in the learners in line with the principle of “Humankind is One” (see Chapter Three, section 3.4.2). Strategies such as group activities and sharing ideas cultivate the habit of listening, supporting and working together in the learners. Moreover, themes such as “Multi-culturalism”, “Gender Equality”, “Peer Pressure” and “Relationships” are intended to promote social skills.

The ultimate achievement in respect of development of social skills will be the establishment of a *circle of friends* or a group of learners who are deeply interdependent and close both affectively and rationally, helping each other to grow and get closer to the *talisman*.

5.4.3 Transformatory moral domain

In YEP, moral education is the process of enabling learners to find moral answers for themselves rather than imposing them. To achieve this goal individual learners are given opportunities to experience and construct their own values and moral system. Moral character education involves “*supporting students' development of autonomous inner standards of justice that overcome the dependence on external authorities* (Snarey & Pavkov, 1992:29).

As far as the strategies for moral development are concerned, learners are presented with moral dilemmas and questions that make them aware of their own values and how they affect the process of decision-making in their daily lives. This reflection on moral dilemmas and moral questions tend to promote moral sensitivity, moral judgement, and moral decision-making (Kohlberg, 1969).

Of the learning domains addressed in YEP, the moral domain is the most significant one. YEP takes a multi-domain approach to facilitating moral outcomes. The moral outcomes are facilitated through the interconnection and inter-play of three domains – the moral, the cognitive, and the social domains – in

line with the multi-component character of the moral domain (see Chapter Four, section 4.4.4.1; see also Figure 5.1).

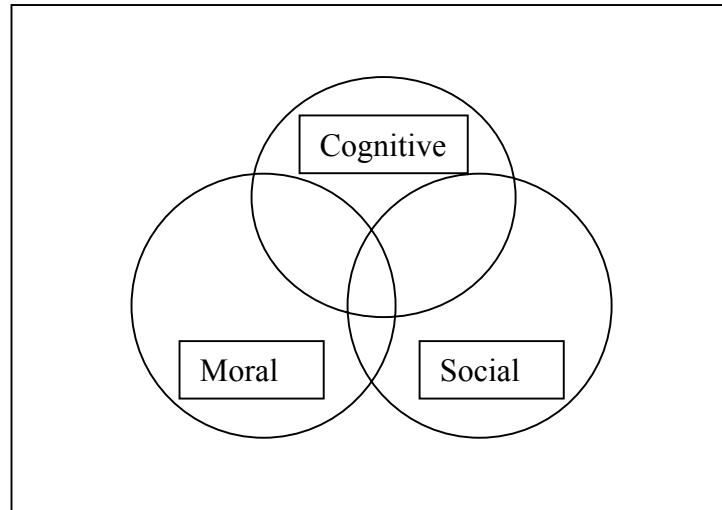


Figure 5.1 The three components of moral development

In respect of the moral domain, youth are made aware of their moral values by going through a series of interrelated questions that help them identify their own beliefs. Rationally, they become aware of the pros and cons of the various decisions as they provide reasons for their choices. As far as social stimulation is concerned, small groups provide them with a social context where the members of the group interact, exchange ideas and influence one another morally. Since peers often move in the same circle, to change an individual member of the group effectively one needs to change and transform the whole group. As Sarien *et al.* (1992:71) said, “*A person’s behaviour as member of a group is more difficult to modify without first changing the group norms*”.

Moreover, the individual needs the support of the group in order to change (Askew & Carnell, 1998:9). In small group discussions, the members explore moral issues together and influence each other within the safe and controlled environment established in the small group. By raising awareness at the three

levels of moral, social and cognitive domains, YEP tends to motivate moral development holistically and strengthen the possibility of change and transformation.

5.4.4 Transformatory emotional domain

The importance of the emotions and their impact on the behaviour of learners is acknowledged and given especial attention in YEP. The point of departure is that both positive and negative emotions motivate and affect decisions (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.5.1). Therefore, emotions should be dealt with first if one wants to improve moral and rational behaviour.

Through relevant questions and discussions, learners in YEP progress through the stages that Goleman (1996:259) recommends for emotional development:

- identify and understand own emotions and those of other people;
- verbalise and talk about those emotions;
- look at a range of alternative emotions; and
- discuss various feelings and their impact on people – such basic discussions and acknowledgement of unresolved feeling will help people to gain an understanding of “why” and “how” people experience emotions.

In addition to the above strategies, the facilitators in YEP are encouraged to create a caring, accepting, and sympathetic learning atmosphere in the classroom through positive and caring interaction and the use of YEP ground rules. The safe and friendly environment is expected to encourage young persons to share their feelings and deeper thoughts. Through a process of self-expression and reflection, an awareness of feelings and how to deal with them will result.

5.4.5 Transformatory spiritual domain

According to YEP, spirituality is the core of the person and the aspect that gives meaning and purpose to life. Soul-searching questions and inspiring quotations

that encourage learners to think about the purpose of life and the good of humanity are used to awaken interest in the *talisman*. Moreover, the following conditions suggested by Zohar and Marshall (2000:16) are met in YEP:

- to ask “why” and to look for connections between things;
- to bring to the surface assumptions about the meaning behind and beyond things;
- to become more self-aware; and
- to be more honest with ourselves and more courageous.

Table 5.7 compares YEP’s transformational model with the transformational models introduced by Askew and Carnell (1998:72) Behr, (1990:91) and Goleman (1996:259) – dealt with in Chapters Four and Five. There are many similarities among the transformatory models developed by these scholars. This similarity enables the merging of different strategies for the development of different learning domains.

Table 5.7
Comparison of transformational models

Transformation Model (Askew and Carnell)	Problem Solving Model (Behr)	Emotional Transformation Model (Goleman)	Holistic Transformation Model (YEP)
Reflect on own experience	Identify and understand the problem	Identify own and others’ emotions	Reflect and identify problem
Reflect on self and context	Search and exploration	Verbalise/talk about emotions	Express thoughts and feelings
Make learning explicit	Formulate a plan or hypothesis	Look at alternative emotions	Assess alternative options in groups
Act	Action	Discuss various feelings	Adopt/act
Apply the learning	---	Discuss ways of coping	Evaluate
Feedback	---	---	---

5.5 Implementation techniques

5.5.1 Setting the scene for the YEP sessions

According to the YEP manual, before starting with the themes in the classroom facilitators and learners are required to formulate a set of ground rules. The exercise of setting the ground rules is considered to be of utmost importance, as it sets the tone and the atmosphere for the achievement of the moral and spiritual outcomes of the programme. The atmosphere in the classroom impacts on the learners in an “unofficial” and “implicit” way, referred to as the “hidden” or “covert” curriculum (Lubisi, Parker & Wedekind, 1998:79). Blair, Jones and Simpson (1975:188) believe that a friendly learning atmosphere is one of the most important and powerful motivating factors.

Learners are more likely to respect the rules when they have had a hand in setting them. Although it is the learners who should suggest the rules, several ground rules fundamental to YEP should be raised and suggested by the facilitators if learners do not mention them. However, learners themselves often do suggest these rules (DeVries & Zan, 1994:127). These ground rules represent the core values that have been honoured and respected for centuries by various members of the human family (De Roche & Williams, 1998:19). They are non-negotiable and are part and parcel of the theoretical principles of YEP:

- *respect*: Respect in various sense of the word is intended – for example, honouring others, patience, no interruptions, no laughing at people, paying attention to others, and punctuality.
- *open and honest expression of opinions*: Learners are encouraged to express their real and honest points of view about the issues raised in the questions rather than looking for answers which sound “right” or definitions which come from textbooks.
- *confidentiality*: In order to protect the rights of learners to privacy and to encourage honest expression of ideas, learners are asked to adhere to

confidentiality. This means not talking outside of the group about matters honestly raised within the group.

- *co-operation*: All learners need to work co-operatively in the groups in order to learn from one another, and to co-operate with one another in order to make the *talisman* happen.
- *freedom of thought*: In other words, everyone is entitled to his/her own opinion. This rule protects the democratic rights of individuals to hold their own views and encourages tolerance towards diversity.

Table 5.8 displays the YEP ground rules and the theoretical principles that they reinforce. Ground rules are set in order to promote:

- general discipline in the class;
- self-discipline;
- honoring the learners;
- practicing universal values of respect, honesty, co-operation and freedom of thought; and
- creating a spiritually and morally positive and enriching atmosphere.

It is only after setting the scene and creating a positive atmosphere through the establishment of ground rules in the classroom that the actual lessons on a theme can begin.

Table 5.8
Ground rules in relation to theoretical and methodological principles of YEP

Ground Rules	Theoretical and Methodological Principles
Respect	Spirituality and nobility of man; honouring the self
Honest expression of ideas	Honesty; integrity
Confidentiality	Safe-guards honesty; encourages open expression of ideas
Co-operation	Caring; interdependency
Everyone is entitled to own opinion	Justice/democracy; human rights

5.5.2 Techniques for effective implementation of the themes

The effective implementation of the themes also depends on the effective use of relevant implementation techniques for each section, as the recommended techniques maximise the extent and quality of learning. These techniques are included in the training course for facilitators.

Table 5.9 gives a summary of the implementation techniques for the various sections of the themes in relation to the theoretical principles discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

Table 5.9
Summary of implementation techniques in various sections of the themes in relation to the theoretical principles of YEP

Theme Section	Implementation Technique	Theoretical/Methodological Principles
Setting ground rules	Learners and the facilitator formulate together	Soulful classroom; spiritualised atmosphere; honour the self and others
Reflection	One minute of reflection after each question	Regular thinking practice; accommodate different thinking paces/abilities
Questions	Follow the sequence of the questions	Progressive; gradual change; simple to complex
Questions	Every learner should provide an answer; requires open/genuine answers	All can learn; all have potential for <i>talisman</i>
Questions	Learners should take turns in sharing their responses in the groups	Justice; equal opportunity for learning for all; honouring the self; everyone is important
Questions	No bookish answers; accept all answers	Everyone's answer based on own experience and personal belief system; promote self- confidence/affirmation
Questions	One question at a time	Gradual progress
Group work	Open and honest expression of ideas	Change requirement
Group work	Confidentiality	Respect for privacy; safe-guarding open expression
Group work	No ridicule or rejection	Respect; freedom of response
Group work	Flexible time	Process of change
Group work	4 to 5 learners per group	Manageable; open communication; productive
Group work	First few themes use rotating groups; later use fixed groups.	Learners to get to know each other; promote unity in diversity; form new relationships; build trust
Group work	No domination by one group member	Equality; chance for everyone to learn; all are important
Group work	No competition	Encourage co-operation; promote affective outcomes
Group work	No glorification of one person	Respect for all; equality
Group work	No imposition by teachers/facilitators	Freedom of thought; change cannot be imposed; facilitators are also in search of <i>talisman</i>
Quotations	Food for thought	Promote spiritual development; inspire
Quotations	Group members choose the quotation	Freedom of choice
Quotations	Teachers and learners add/bring quotations	Diversity enriches; dynamic participation

5.6 Transformational design patterns

It is clear from the above discussion that a major objective of YEP is to encourage change and transformation in the learners. Looking at the overall design of YEP, several transformational design patterns emerge:

- three-level learning design;
- vertical and horizontal learning design; and
- inside-out learning design.

Each of these aspects is discussed below.

5.6.1 Three-level learning design

YEP adopts a three-level learning design. Learning opportunities are structured in such a way that learners get involved in learning at three different but related levels – the individual input level, the group input level, and the text input level.

At the individual input level, learners are required to reflect on real-life issues independently of others and to give independent solutions to these real-life problems. They are motivated to learn deeply about themselves, their feelings, values, beliefs, and thoughts. At the group level, learners learn about and with peers through discussion and dialogue within groups. At the text level, they learn by evaluating various quotations. As they move through these levels, learners are expected to integrate their individualised learning with that of their peers as well as those reflected in the quotations, and thus grow in their own unique way.

5.6.2 Vertical and horizontal learning design

Learners in YEP go through the process of learning both individually and as members of small groups. Therefore, the process of learning is expected to take place both vertically and horizontally.

At the vertical level, it is assumed that learners go through a continuous and regular process of reflection, soul searching and contemplation of their feelings, thoughts, values and attitudes as they try to answer questions. This intra-communication may lead to deep learning and self-knowledge, which is a prerequisite for transformation. Self-knowledge and understanding of one’s own thinking is important for self-improvement and development of the individual’s cognitive abilities (Travers, Elliott & Kratochwill, 1993:275).

At the horizontal level, learning is shared and shaped by the learners within the small discussion groups. Learning happens through expressing and exchanging feelings, views, facts and attitudes, continuously constructing, comparing, adding and weaving the thread of thoughts shared by the group members. Through consultation and interrelated communication in the groups, learners are expected to connect and relate to one another, sharing intellectual, emotional, moral, social and spiritual messages.

Figure 5.2 graphically represents the vertical and horizontal nature of learning and the steps in three levels of learning in YEP.

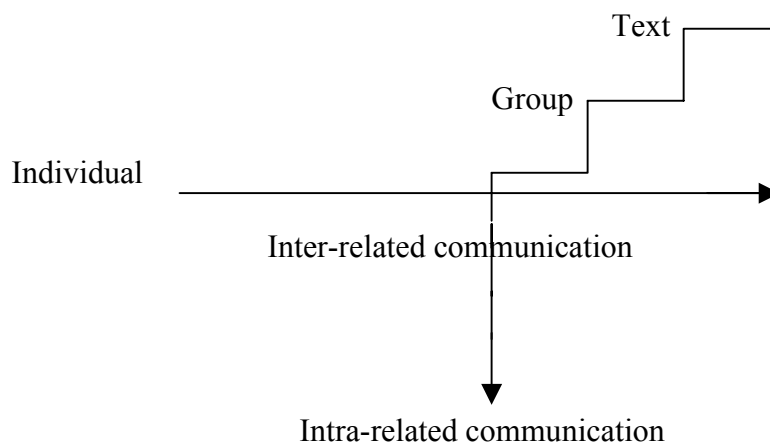


Figure 5.2 Vertical and horizontal design patterns of YEP

5.6.3 Inside-out design

In YEP, learners are made to think about the impact of their decisions on themselves, their families, their peers and their communities through real-life stories and scenarios. They are also encouraged to think about the immediate results of their actions as well as the long- term effect. This exercise is done keeping in mind the self-centeredness characteristic of adolescents (Mosher, 1992:186) and their tendency to being impulsive and spontaneous. It is hoped that they can see the bigger picture and understand the ripple effect of their actions (see Figure 5.3).

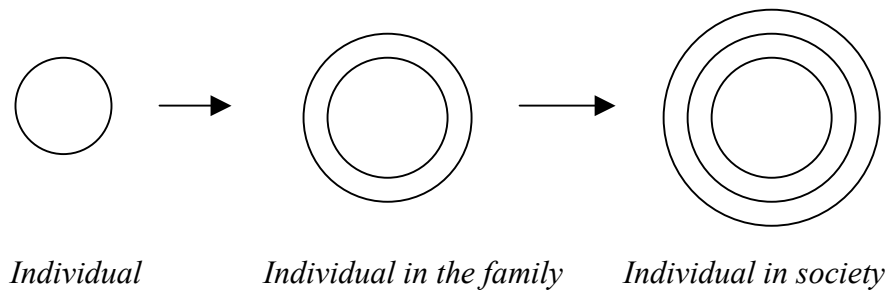


Figure 5.3 Inside-out design pattern of YEP

Going through the transformational patterns envisaged in the design of YEP, learners are guided to get to know themselves, to learn from peers and to aspire to higher human ideals through exposure to spiritual writings from literature.

Three equal partners complement the learning process in YEP; they become prominent in the transformational design referred to as the “YEP triangle of role-players”.

5.7 YEP triangle of role-players

The facilitator, the learner and peers are regarded as equal role-players, each making a unique contribution to the process of learning (see Figure 5.4).

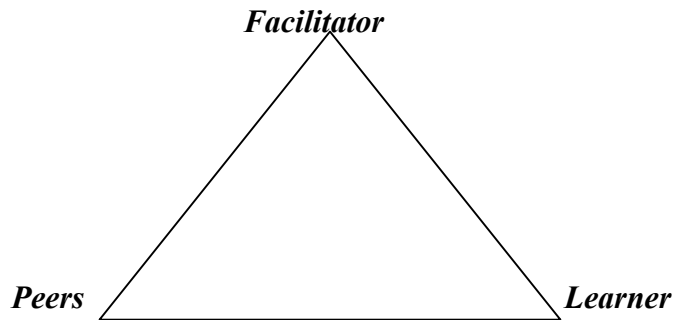


Figure 5.4 YEP triangle of role-players

Traditionally, the triangle of role-players in the classroom is considered to be the teacher, the learner and the content. Table 5.10 compares the learner in the YEP classroom with the learner in the traditional classroom:

**Table 5.10
Comparison of the learner in the traditional classroom and the YEP classroom**

Traditional Learner	YEP Learner
Isolated	Sociable
Low self-esteem	Self-confident
Receiver	Producer
Follower	Initiator
Part of the crowd	Individuality recognised
Competitive	Co-operative
Dependent	Independent

Clearly, an important shift in focus of the role-players and their roles is noticeable in YEP. The following sub-sections summarise the new roles assigned to the role-players in YEP; these roles are summarised in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11
The roles of the members of the YEP triangle

YEP Learner	YEP Peer	YEP Facilitator
The starting point/focus	Co-worker	Creator of learning atmosphere
The independent thinker	Critical friend	Counsellor; mediator
Knowledge constructor	Encourager; supporter	supporter
Problem solver	Evaluator/assessor	Co-ordinator
Implementer of change	Facilitator in small group discussions	Motivator; challenger

5.7.1 The role of the learner

The learner, being the central point of YEP, is the one who plays the most important role in the YEP class. The roles of learners are summarised as follows:

- reflection:
 - reflect,
 - identify personal problems,
 - identify general problems,
 - seek personal solutions;

- co-operation:
 - co-operate in the small groups,
 - communicate with peers,
 - support peers,
 - become a trusted friend.

- agent of change:

- identify own values,
- identify own potential/*talisman* and strive for it,
- help others realise their *talisman*.

5.7.2 The role of the facilitator

The second side in the YEP triangle of role-players is the facilitator of learning. The YEP facilitator is expected to fulfill the following roles:

- create a friendly and trusting environment;
- set up the ground rules with the help of the learners;
- group or help to group the learners into small harmonious groups;
- pose further questions when necessary;
- challenge the learners at different levels of thinking;
- motivate;
- counsel;
- teach by example;
- believe in the *talisman* and look for it in the learners; and
- find his/her most important role to be that of serving the learners in their pursuit of the *talisman*.

In summary, the role of the YEP facilitator is to assist the learners in an “*on-going push toward self-improvement*” (Poon Teng, 1998:1), which leads to the fulfilment of *talisman*.

5.7.3 The role of peers

In YEP peers are as important as the facilitators are. They play various roles as they teach, counsel, support, question, reason, and negotiate with one another. Peers are valuable intellectual, cultural, and social resources that if correctly utilised can effect positive influence on the quality of learning. In the small group discussions "peer pressure" is used positively for the benefit of the group

members. In spite of the importance of peers, in traditional education the role of peers was ignored and thus an important learning resource was left untapped.

5.7.4 The classroom

The three role-players of YEP interact within a classroom which is monitored by certain ground rules (see Figure 5.5). If successfully implemented the family-like *soulful* atmosphere of the classroom create a platform where learners feel safe when talking about their problems.

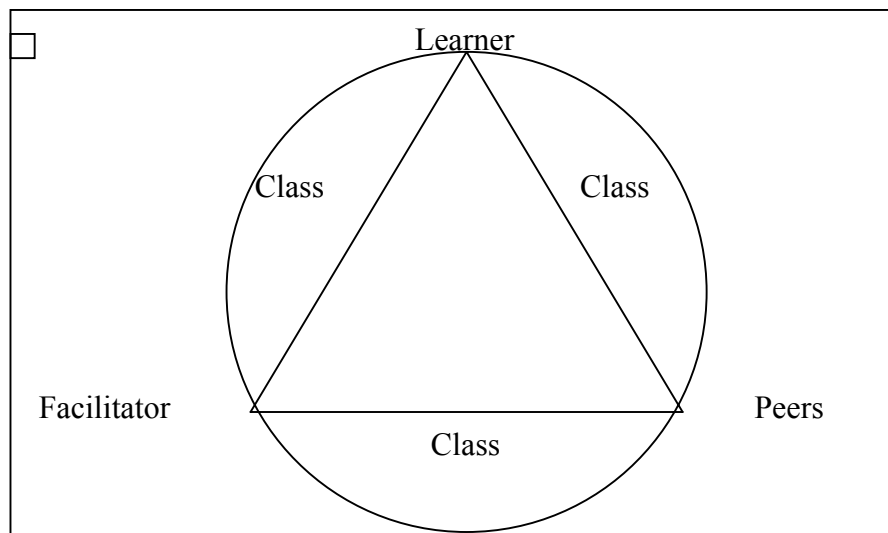


Figure 5.5 The interactive positioning of the YEP triangle of role-players in the classroom

In such a classroom, the teacher moves away from teaching to enabling and facilitating self-reflection, sharing experiences and solving problems (Askew & Carnell, 1998:102). The YEP classroom is expected to inspire thoughtfulness and respect for human values. As Greene (1995:43) advised, “*our classrooms ought to be nurturing and thoughtful and just all at once; they ought to pulsate with conceptions of what it is to be human and alive*”.

Table 5.12 depicts the differences between the YEP classroom and the traditional classroom.

Table 5.12
Comparison of the traditional classroom and the YEP classroom

Traditional Classroom	YEP Classroom
Competitive	Co-operative
Still	Dynamic
Impersonal	Friendly
Teacher-centred	Learner-centred
Cognitive	Holistic
Spoon-fed	Independent
One-way communication	Multi-directional communication
Passive	Active
Fixed seats	Rotating seats

5.8 Special features of YEP

In addition to the characteristics discussed so far, YEP is distinguished by the following special features, which are discussed in detail below:

- flexibility;
- simplicity; and
- individualised learning.

5.8.1 Flexibility

YEP is a flexible programme:

- YEP has intentionally been designed to be flexible so that it is inclusive of South African youth, both inside and outside the school system. Its curriculum is intended to complement the Life Orientation Learning Area in schools, and to be used as an independent life skills programme outside the schooling system.

- Teachers and non-professionally trained persons, including the youth themselves, can facilitate YEP.
- The programme is also flexible in respect of time allocation, as its curriculum does not need to be completed within a prescribed time. The needs and reactions of the learners will determine the amount of time that should be spent on each theme. However, the programme is planned and recommended for a period of one academic year, two to three hours per week.
- The programme is flexible and dynamic in respect of its content as it allows facilitators to add their own questions, quotations, games or other activities to enrich the content of the curriculum.

5.8.2 Simplicity

According to the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR, 2002:12), effective programmes are those that use simple and basic strategies. YEP is simple and easy to follow. It uses simple language, short sentences and clear questions.

5.8.3 Individualised learning

An important feature of YEP is that it emphasises the improvement and unique learning of every individual by giving all learners equal learning opportunities. In YEP, every learner is given the chance to learn according to his or her own culture, beliefs, unique needs and gifts. Educating the learner in the light of his or her own cultural view and philosophy of life should result in reliable self-knowledge and knowledge of life, which are vital for decision-making (Jacobs in Louw, 1993:116). After every YEP session, every learner is expected to have made some progress – not necessarily the same amount or in the same way and with the same quality, but in his or her own unique and individualised way.

Having described the design characteristics of YEP, the following analysis of a sample theme from its curriculum will display the practice-theory relationship in this programme.

5.9 Analysis of a sample theme

In this section a sample theme from YEP will be analysed in order to display the way in which the theory, methods and techniques have been merged. To complete this exercise each section of the theme will be discussed separately. It should be noted that the actual study of themes only starts after ground rules for the group have been set out and a suitable learning atmosphere has been created.

5.9.1 The example – Theme Nine: Drug Abuse

Note that all quotations in this section are taken from the Youth Enrichment Programme (Farhangpour, 1999:28-29).

5.9.1.1 Section A. Questions

The facilitator or the group leader poses the following questions to the participants one at a time and asks them to take a minute to think before they answer:

1. *Some kids think it is “cool” to smoke and use drugs. Do you agree with them?*
2. *There are lots of advertisements against smoking, yet there are many youth that smoke. Why?*
3. *What will happen to a community in which most of its youth are addicted to drugs?*
4. *What is it that youth achieve by drinking and smoking?*
5. *Do you know anyone who has succeeded in life because they have been addicted to drugs?*
6. *Who benefits from the fact that so many youth are becoming addicted to drugs?*
7. *Some say that drugs make you feel “high”, but what will follow that state of feeling “high”?*
8. *Can you think of means other than alcohol and drugs to feel “high”?*
9. *Youth usually want to be independent of others, especially adults. Being addicted makes them depend on drugs. Isn't this a contradiction?*

10. *How do drugs affect our minds?*
11. *Some believe that those who feel lost in life and or feel like a failure find refuge in drugs. Do you agree? How can you help these youths, and what alternatives can you suggest to them?*
12. *Is it financially viable to use drugs?*

5.9.1.2 Section B. Expression of ideas and discussion

Students express their views one by one in their groups, and reflect and react on views voiced by their peers.

5.9.1.3 Section C. Evaluation of quotation

The facilitator or the group leader presents one or two of the quotations to the participants for reflection and evaluation:

1. *Experience hath shown how greatly the renouncing of smoking, of intoxicating drink, and of opium, conduceth to health and vigour, to the expansion and keenness of the mind and the bodily strength. There are today a people who strictly avoid tobacco, intoxicating liquor and opium. This people is far and away superior to the others, for strength and physical courage, for health, beauty and comeliness.*
2. *It is inadmissible that man, who hath been endowed with reason, should consume that which stealeth it away*

5.9.2 The analysis

In order to analyse this theme, each section will be examined independently and its relevance will be explored.

5.9.2.1 Section A: Questions

In Section A of the theme, the facilitator poses the questions to the learners one at the time. If the learners are grouped, one of the group members or the leader reads the first question to the group, after which the learners are expected to stay quiet and to reflect on the question posed. In analysis of the questions it becomes clear

that the questions are open-ended and often motivate the learner to pay attention to the different angles of the topics. Each question challenges the learner to think in a different domain.

An in-depth analysis of each question can be found in Appendix 2.

5.9.2.2 Section B. Expression of ideas and discussion

In this section, learners share their personal answers with their peers in the group, moving from self-reflection (vertical line of learning) to sharing with and learning from the group members (horizontal line of learning).

5.9.2.3 Section C: Evaluation of quotations

Here learners reflect upon one or all of the quotations provided. The quotations use a language very different from what they are used to, and this challenges them to think constructively. By going through the quotations they will be exposed to a different realm of thinking, above their own usual level of thinking. They are encouraged to use the glossary at the end of the manual to find the meaning of difficult words and to stretch their minds to understand the language and the message in the quotations.

The first quotation provides some reasoning on the advantages of avoiding drugs and smoking and the second quotation shows the “irrationality” of taking drugs.

Having gone through the quotations in the groups, learners are guided to study the page on *Facts about Drug Abuse* provided in the manual (Appendix 3). The purpose of the fact sheet is to give the learners some scientific information on the use of drugs. The groups may or may not – according to the decision of the learners and the facilitator – share their findings with the class as a whole.

5.10 Conclusion

In seeking the relationship of theory and practice in YEP, a multi- skill transformational design was revealed merging various transformational patterns supported by methodological strategies to achieve the set outcomes.

In YEP learning takes place as learners progress through various phases in the themes, dealing with different processes as follows:

- Section A:
 - reflect on the problem,
 - examine own feelings, knowledge, and values,
 - verbalise experiences, thoughts and feelings,
 - seek own solution to the problem.

- Section B:
 - view problem from different perspectives,
 - weigh different options,
 - share with peers,
 - give critical feedback to peers,
 - find solutions to problem by consultation (co-operative problem solving).

- Section C:
 - expose to literary readings,
 - compare with own views,
 - evaluate different options,
 - come to a personal decision/conclusion.

The deliberations in this chapter have revealed that where the intention is multi-domain quality learning, the design of a programme cannot be left to chance but must be built on an integrated practice theory approach.

Having examined the theoretical, methodological and design characteristics of YEP in the last five chapters, YEP will be put to the test in the next chapter through the empirical research.