

# Exploring the Long-Term Application of Design Thinking Principles among Students in a Selected South African University

**Dr. Luther-King Junior Zogli**  
Durban University of Technology, South Africa

## Abstract

There is a significant emphasis on entrepreneurship in South Africa's National Development Plan, Vision 2030, which aims to improve regulatory reform and support to boost mass entrepreneurship. This initiative is intended to address the high youth unemployment rate of over 65%. Universities are also tasked with championing this cause by training and supporting future entrepreneurs. This study examines a selected South African university that adopted the Design Thinking (DT) teaching methodology to foster innovative and creative thinking, which are essential for entrepreneurship. DT involves understanding real-life challenges, identifying opportunities, and co-creating innovative solutions for complex problems. First-year students in the Management Department undergo DT training, but this teaching method is not continued in their second to fourth years of study. Consequently, the long-term impact of this teaching method on these students remains uncertain. This study aims to determine if a group of 30 third-year students still value and apply DT principles to promote creativity and innovation. A qualitative focus group discussion with 6 participants will be conducted, and the data will be analysed using thematic analysis. The study aims to reveal whether a single exposure to DT training is sufficient to foster lasting creativity and innovation or if there is a loss of learning over time.

**Keywords:** University students, creativity, learning loss, entrepreneurship, innovation