



**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE**

**ENVISION**  **2030**

transparency • honesty • integrity • respect • accountability  
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# An Exploration of the Challenges to Student Success in a Nursing Programme at a University of Technology in South Africa

*Dr Shoba Rathilal, Dr Nokuthula Mavela, Dr Nomusa Zikalala, Ms Buzani Ntombela, Mr Peter Kalanga, Prof Livingstone Makondo and  
Dr Celenkosini Nxumalo*



" I have nursed this ambition since I was young and I have done everything I can to prepare myself for the demanding course and my future career. My study, my work and my care experience have equipped me with the requisite personal skills of a nurse. The course will provide me with the knowledge and experience to realise my dream and begin a lifelong career in nursing"

# Background

Low success rates continue to be a challenge in higher education undergraduate programmes

Hambisa Focus at DUT aimed to improving success rates through integrating HIP  
1 pilot programme per faculty

In Health Sciences: Nursing programme was chosen

Improving student success through **Knowing, Doing, Transforming**

An analysis of the programme was undertaken to understand the factors impacting on student performance to inform the conceptualisation and implementation of high impact practices to improve student success

Two approaches: Supporting specific students “stuck in the middle” (20)  
Programmatic Approach (curriculum, staff, students)

# Knowing: Data sources

Cohort  
Data

SEQs and  
LEQs

Handbooks

AD reports

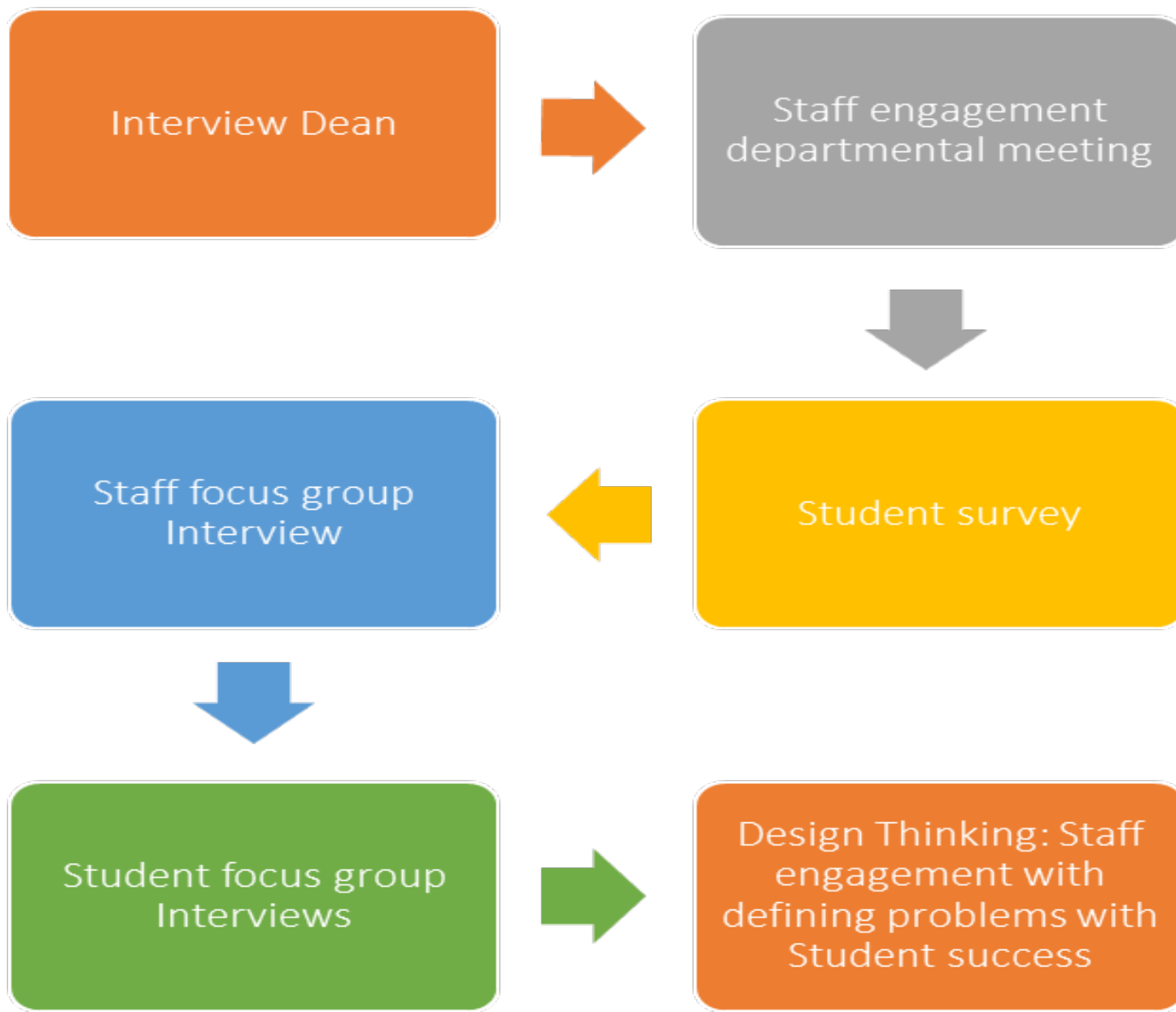
Curriculum  
map

ECP map

Exam Board  
Reports

# FINDINGS

- No glaring high risk subject
- High drop-out rates
- LEQs between 2.5 and 3.5 suggesting possible improvement needed
- High rate of cancellation by students referred to AD by exam board: implying limited take up of support
- Challenge with practical subjects
- Gaps in academic literacies
- Lack of consequential policies
- Need for staff student committees
- Deterioration in student practices and performance from first year to graduation
- Theory and practice divide
- Psycho- social factors: (pregnancy, drug abuse)
- ECPs out-performing mainstream program



# Themes

## Results from engagements on factors affecting student success

1. Curriculum and pedagogical factors
2. Social factors (unplanned pregnancies, drug abuse, financial challenges)
3. Intrinsic academic literacy challenges
4. Dichotomy of nursing culture and student values
5. Student-lecturer relational challenges
6. Lack of student accountability and agency
7. University environment VS traditional nursing culture VS student behaviour



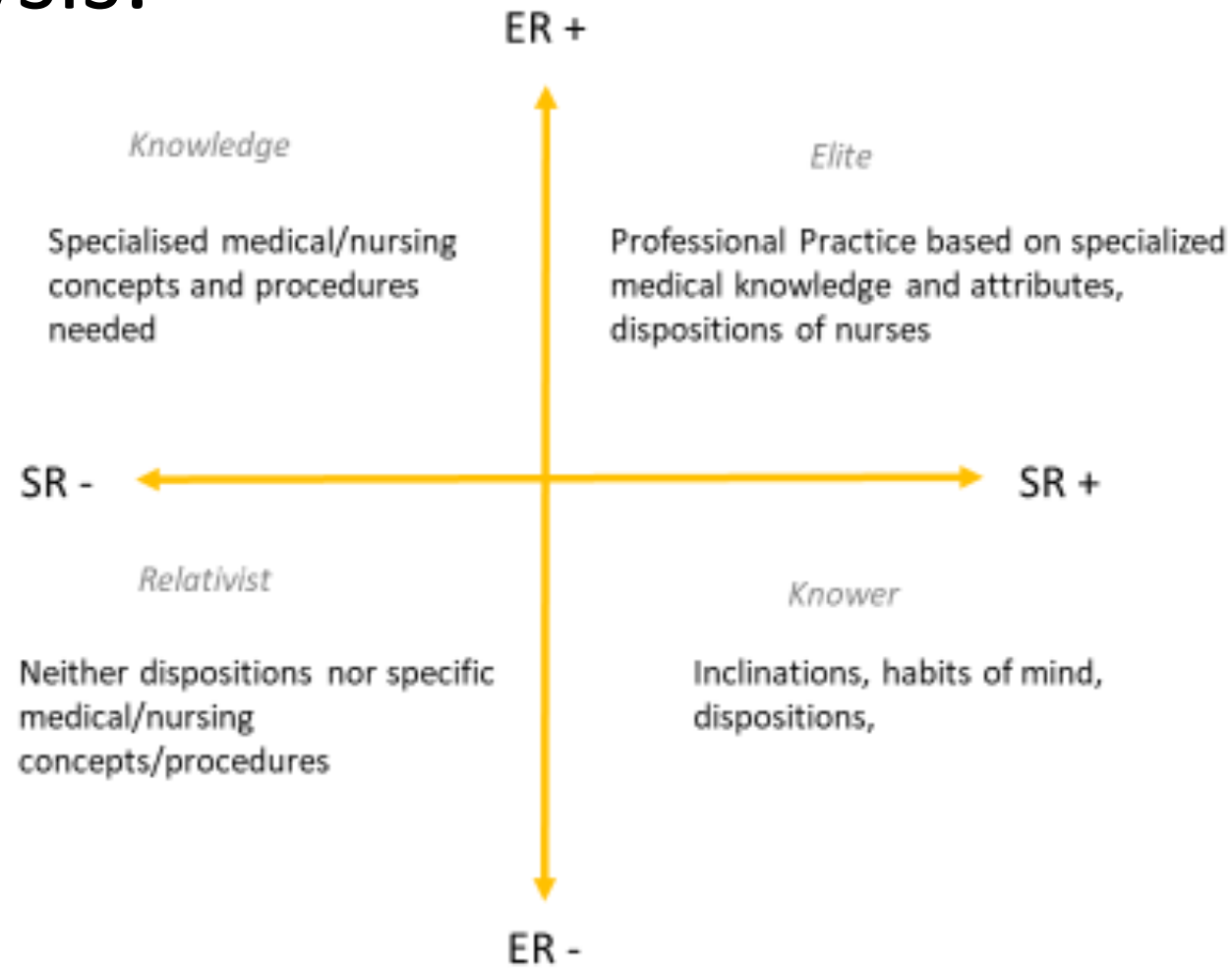
# Student Support

- Institutional support
  - Departmental support
  - Residence support
- 
- First Year Student Experience (FYSE)
  - Senior Year Student Experience (SYSE)
  - Residence Educational Programme (REP)
  - Academic Advising (AA)
  - Technology for Learning (TFL)

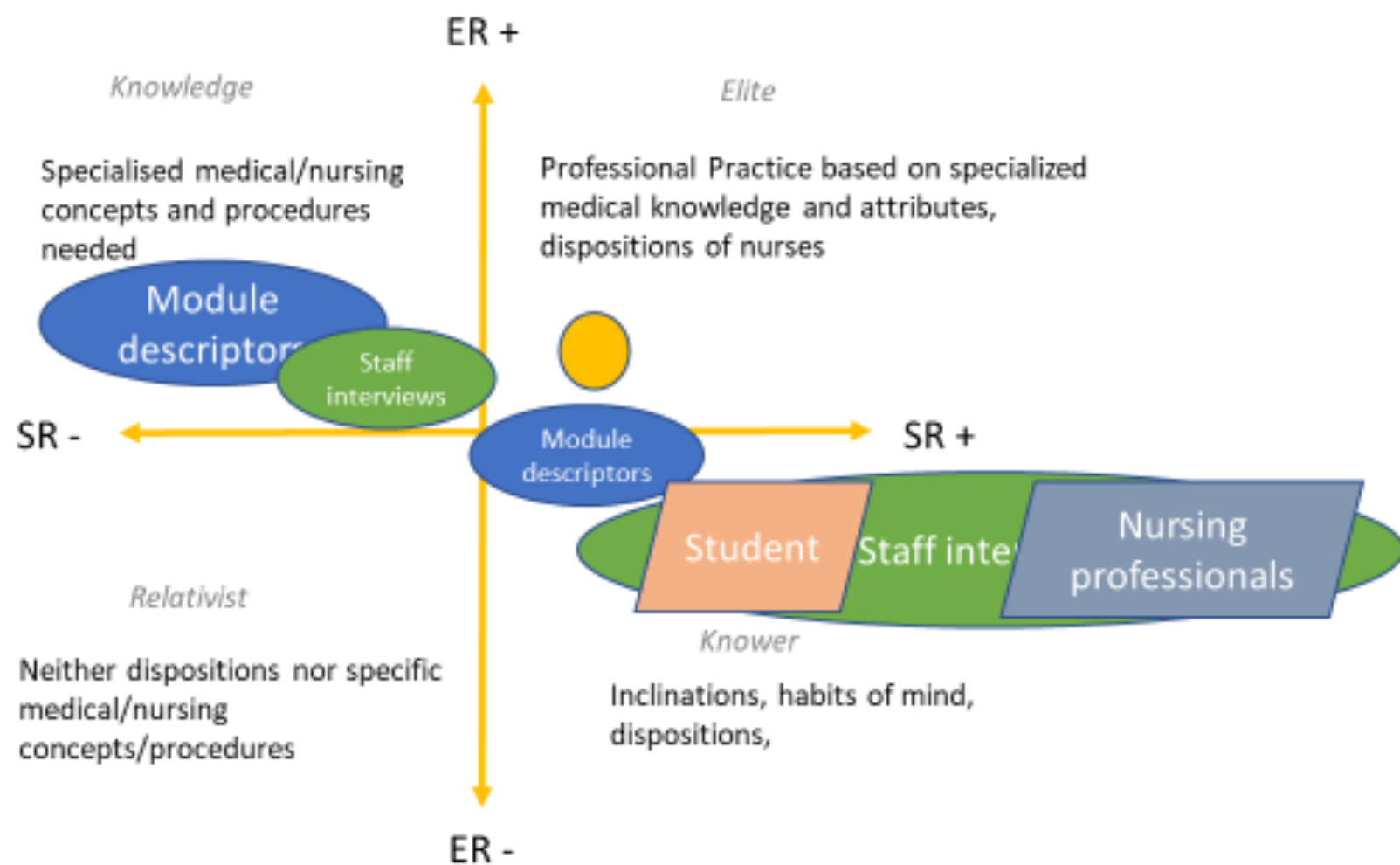
The ECP program appears to be doing better in terms of student success hence there needs to be a harnessing of the best practices from this program, in relation to TLA and the curriculum



# Deeper Analysis: LCT



Adapted from Maton, 2014:30



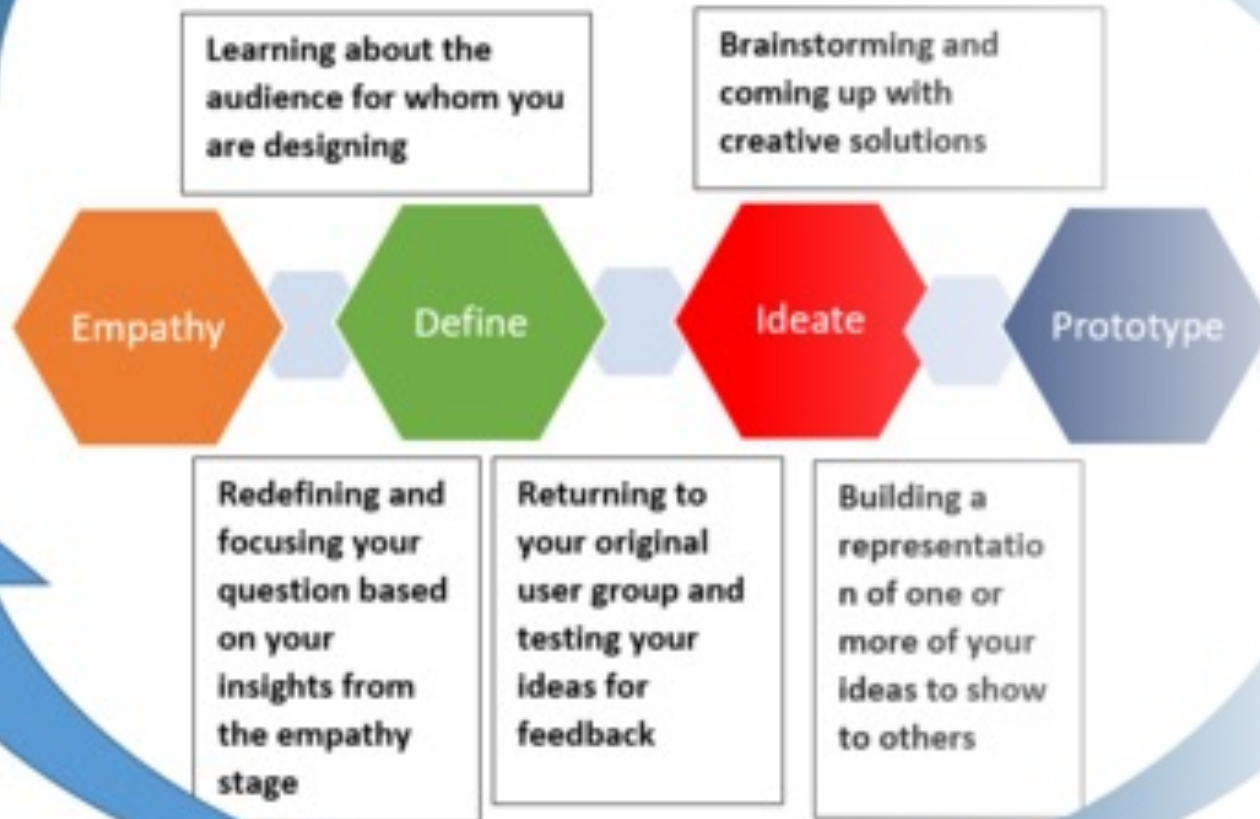
Adapted from Maton, 2014:30

# Social Relations : Gazes



# Design Thinking: Redefining the Student Success Challenge

## Design Thinking



How might we :

- Improve conceptual Understanding of threshold concepts
- Improve student engagements in lectures
- How might we develop attributes and dispositions
- How might we strengthen students agency

# Re-envisioned tutorship programme



Design Thinking process  
with staff and students



A specific industry based  
tutor



Industry experience



Theory application in  
practice

# Adapting HIPs

- Specialized Tutorials
- Contextualized HIPs that include psycho-social and academic support
- Focus on developing agency through conceptual and contextual knowledge building and knower building
- Developing students' ability to recognize, interpret and apply legitimate academic and social practices
- Clinical Practice
  - Carefully select sites of clinical practice
  - Collaboration with onsite mentors
  - Design of Workplace workbook, reflective self-directed learning - practice on knowledge and practice



# REFERENCES:

- Maton, K., Hood, S. and Shay, S. 2015. *Knowledge-building: educational studies in legitimation code theory*. Routledge.
- Razzouk, R. and Shute, V. 2012. What is design thinking and why is it important?. *Review of educational research*, 82(3), pp.330-348.
- Geyer, N., 2020. Nursing education in 2020. *Professional Nursing Today*, 24(2), pp.26-28.

THANK  
YOU



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