UNE L&T Symposium 2024 – Presentation Synopsis

1. Title of Presentation:
Shared Spaces in a Virtual World

2. Presenter(s) Name(s) and Affiliation(s):
Tania Court. UNE Life Student Experience Manager

3. Main Takeaways:
Takeaway 1: For our online students, the lack of shared physical spaces can significantly impact their university experience limiting opportunities for spontaneous interactions, collaborative study sessions, and forming friendships, potentially leading to feelings of social isolation.

Takeaway 2: Utilising the Gather Town platform, UNE Life has created a virtual campus for UNE online students, including informal study rooms and social spaces. A program of virtual study sessions and social connection programs is being implemented to encourage student engagement.

4. Application in Educational Contexts:

Assessment:
  - While we wouldn't recommend that the Virtual Campus be utilised as a standard assessment offering, UNE Life is happy to facilitate alternative assessments or work-integrated-learning opportunities.

Student Engagement:
  - The platform takes content that has been already created and displays it in a fun, engaging environment. Websites, hosted videos, PDFs, images, and 3D renderings can be utilised to create a sense of discovery and engagement.
  - Spaces have been created to allow a variety of engagement opportunities for students including study spaces, UNE student support resources, and a variety of social event spaces such as a cultural centre, student bar, and pine forest.

5. Valuable Sources and References:
Source 1: https://app.gather.town/app/akWeuVb6M5IIX29B/UNElife - Link to the Virtual Campus
Source 2: https://www.tunefm.net/staff-guide-to-the-virtual-campus/ - Link to Virtual Campus Resources including MyLearn tiles & text

6. Weakness and Area for Future Research:
Weakness: Getting the word out to students.
Future Research: UNE Life does not conduct research; however, we're willing to facilitate student or staff research programs at the campus.