UNE L&T Symposium 2026 – Presentation Synopsis

1. Title of Presentation:

Addressing the needs of the bush. The development of the UNE Digital Psychology Clinic: Expanding access to high-quality, modernised clinical training to rural, regional and remote areas.

2. Presenter(s) Name(s) and Affiliation(s):

1. Henri Dohnt, Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, School of Psychology
2. Dr Hayley Farrell, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, Course Coordinator Master of Professional Psychology, School of Psychology
3. Dr Amanda Jefferys, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, Course Coordinator Master of Psychology (Clinical) Programs, Acting Director Clinical Psychology Programs, School of Psychology

3. Main Takeaways:

Takeaway 1:

The UNE Digital Psychology Clinic's online format expands training access for regional, rural, and remote students, overcoming financial, social, and geographical barriers to increase clinician representation in under-served areas and better support communities where they are most needed.

Takeaway 2:

The Clinic delivers modern curricula by leveraging diverse regional expertise to model realistic, tailored interventions and high-standard, APAC-aligned practical skills, ensuring students are workforce-ready for various settings and client presentations across Australia.

4. Application in Educational Contexts:

Teaching Methods:

The UNE Digital Psychology Clinic uses *problem-based* and *evidence-based* learning, with simulated client interactions that promote active participation and connect students to real community issues. Diverse clinical expertise is delivered by recruiting a broad range of clinicians to demonstrate live clinical work, giving students exposure to varied presentations, scaffolding increasing complexity, and supporting attainment of core psychological competencies.

Assessment:

Interactive OSCE vignettes, case-based assessments, and authentic scenarios assess applied clinical skills aligned with APAC competencies. Individualised clinical supervision tracks each student’s progress and learning needs, guiding targeted development, supporting reflective growth, and preparing graduates for effective practice with diverse, under-served communities.

Student Engagement:

Varied, realistic client presentations promote authentic engagement and deeper clinical reasoning, while exposure to diverse therapeutic styles supports professional identity. The result is students are supported to learn, live and work within their community enabling family, relationships and community to remain at the fore of their study experience. Peer and supervisor collaboration strengthens learning communities of students who would normally be geographically isolated. Scaffolded training builds work readiness and support graduates to train and practise as place-based clinicians, with their goal to be working on Country.

Curriculum Development:
The clinic model enables rapid integration of emerging community needs and regional expertise into course content. Its repository of simulated client interactions embeds practical skills within theoretical units, bridging the theory-to-practice gap and supporting contemporary delivery (e.g., telehealth, indigenous skills and adaptation to modern medical needs).

5. Valuable Sources and References:
Source 1: An exploratory pilot evaluating a COVID-era simulated psychology placement, showing strong feasibility, acceptability, improved completion rates, and perceived competence gains. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40756945/
Source 2: A multi-campus interprofessional simulation improved allied health students' understanding of professional roles, teamwork and eHealth, boosting confidence in cross-disciplinary communication while highlighting implementation challenges https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.258558388396225

6. Weakness and Area for Future Research:
Weakness: Observing and discussing high-quality video models in supervision alone does not guarantee skill transfer to practice. Because client needs are complex and diverse, the clinic must continually expand and refine its simulated resources and strengthen links to real-world application.

Future Research:
Future research could validate interactive tools, such as AI simulations or video-based interactive assessment, to effectively measure and therefore make improvements on the transfer of clinical skills from simulated training to real-world performance.