RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2023

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Title: Growing the Regional Psychology Workforce – Innovative & Culturally Inclusive Modifications to Curriculum

Abstract: One of the challenges in teaching psychology online is facilitating application-based learning. PSYC421 (Professional Practice 1) offers fourth-year students their first glimpse into psychological assessments in clinical settings. Prior, students found the subject difficult, felt unprepared for the assessment task, and distanced from the subject matter, lecturer and each other.

Cultural diversity in subject content was minimal. To address this (and being mindful of the unique challenges for regional university students to participate in synchronous learning activities) the following innovative changes were made:
1. fortnightly tutorials conducted online, parallelly in a synchronous and asynchronous manner provided opportunities to engage in role-plays, watch video demonstrations of clinical skills, and participate in group discussions;
2. a half-day workshop on psychological assessment with First Nations people; and
3. application-based and scaffolded assessment tasks, having students observe an experienced clinician conduct a culturally-responsive initial session with a simulated client, followed by writing two assessment reports, with the opportunity to implement feedback received from the first before submitting the second.

Academic peer feedback (within and outside the university), and student evaluations praised these application-oriented innovative changes with several students feeling equipped to continue postgraduate psychology study, which is essential to grow the regional workforce.