

Panel Proposal, Hawaii International Conference on Education

**Title:**                               **How to Turn Difficult and Emotional Interactions with Students into Priceless Teaching Opportunities.**

**Topic Area:**                       **Higher Education**

**Presentation Format:**       **Panel**

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**Abstract:** When a situation in higher education results in an expression of heightened emotions, it can throw the professor off-guard as they venture into unknown and dangerous territory. This presentation will explore how these moments may be addressed professionally and with results that teach the students priceless lessons.

Emotionally charged interactions with students are seldom welcomed due to the underlying implications and the “high-drama-effect” it can have on the student, professor, and surrounding community. All we have to do is witness the YouTube video about the “Spitting Professor.” His name just happens to be “David Pecoraro” – He is not me, nonetheless, the situation was video-taped and placed on the Internet for millions to view. While this is an extreme example, it provides a worse case scenario, one which should never be repeated. We can also recall the YouTube video of Karen Klein being bullied by kids on a school bus. This story has the type of results that I am speaking about; the children (and their parents) learn valuable life lessons and Ms. Klein receives \$500,000. from a fund established for her.

More commonly, teaching professors will encounter situations that involve disputes over grading, absences, assignments, and inappropriate behavior. Through stories from personal experience, colleague’s experience, and from the Student Caring Community, I will analyze these situations and present, in a logical timeline how each situation was viewed, from each side, and discuss the resolution.

From these analyses’ I will provide guidelines, verbally and in a take-a-way, about how to prepare for difficult situations and best practices for handling them, professionally, emotionally, and for the benefit of the student.