Performing Empathy: Simulation Training for Dealing with Illness and Death

This week, we will be joined by Alex Munro, who trains actors in simulated care situations at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa HEALTHCast program. Mr. Munro will discuss the program’s use of actors to help nursing students develop empathy and gain skills in patient interaction. Issues of cultural differences in dealing with illness and death will be addressed. The evening will feature an example of the work done in HEALTHCast training.

The Evening’s Presenter

Alex Munro serves as the simulation trainer and acting coach for HealthCAST at UHM, a collaborative program, which he helped to develop, between the university’s School of Nursing and its Department of Theatre and Dance. Through HealthCAST, Alex trains actors to perform as patients in improvised encounters at the School of Nursing’s Translational Health Science Simulation Center. Alex received his MFA in Directing from UHM, and is now a PhD candidate in Performance Studies, focusing on applied theatre and patient simulation. His paper “The Unrecognized Actor in Simulated and Standardized Patient Programs” was recently presented at the annual conference of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. In addition to his work with HealthCAST, Alex continues to direct; his next project is Equus at Manoa Valley Theatre.