**Intro:**

ladies and gentlemen boys and girls welcome to the class act at KauaiCommunity College the show that highlights campus happenings that goes deeper with its professors and students so you can hear why this is where you want to be it's that time let's get it on

**Patrick:**

Hey everyone, and welcome to the show today we're with Professor Mark Ombrello.How are you today?

**Mark:**

Very well thank you, good morning.

**Patrick:**

So tell me a little bit what classes you teach here?

**Mark:**

Well I teach history and Japanese language okay tell me a little bit about history well I'm sure most of the students here know that one of the major gen ed requirements would be the world history class so I teach both the first part of the survey and the second part of the survey that's history 121 151 152 okay and in addition to that I teach a number of 200-level classes I teach a film in history class I teach Asian history and I will be teaching a modern Pacific history class coming soon okay are these online classes or in person both both and then we have another professor who also teaches those those classes as well so there's always enough so if you need your 151 and your 150 to you should be able to find a class in in a format that works for you.

**Patrick:**

so online classes have been getting pretty popular these days how do you feel about teaching an online class and how is the the switch from teaching in person to online

**Mark:**

That's an excellent question and I didn't know I'm relatively new to it I didn't know what

to expect and as I've had a few semesters with it I've learned that it works it can work but it's actually more work then I thought it would be and it's actually more work than teaching a face-to-face class if you want to do it right so I think this is an interesting conversation that students might want might be interested in hearing you know from from from an instructor side about what goes on with it because if it's not done with a tremendous amount of care

consistency and sort of you know organization mm-hmm it can go wrong in a million different ways really quickly so I spend an awful lot of time making sure that students you know when they land in the interphase they know what they need to do it's clear what kind of assignments they have to they have to complete for the week and that my responses are timely so that there's no real kind of dead air or dead time between the weeks and they're just sort

of left hanging and and if you don't take care of all those little details I think we're not doing them you know I think we're sort of not meeting our responsibilities yeah and students kind of have to be a diligent to actually attend the online class

**Patrick:**

Because when I think of an online class I think it's gonna be more of a casual thing like I just have to tune in on my laptop and just maybe like fill out some worksheets on a website is that is it a lot more than that .

**Mark:**

Well it yes and no yeah I mean let's be honest students shop around and some students

are looking for easy yeah easy classes right and word gets around I'm sure you've probably heard my reputation I've heard it you know I know that students say that I'm a hard teacher well sorry but actually my students learn no and I would you know if you stick with it if you stick with the program you believe in the system 70% plus of my students who actually finish get a grade of a b or above right so it doesn't matter what it's a matter of doing work .

**Patrick:**

okay cool so going back to this online versus physical class thing when would you recommend an online class versus a physical class?

**Mark:**

obviously it depends on the student and but what are some things you're looking for a really good question and and it may you know online it's not for everybody right but you know here at KCC and we just and I think this is probably just pretty a pretty uniform across the board you know it's not easy here and we're trying to do the best we can to to listen to you all and

find out well do you want to have a two week schedule do you want to have a three weeks ago so we're working on the schedule and now it seems like I think I think the I think the number was what 70% of students are technically part-time Yeah right and so if that's the if that's the number and if that's sort of the the demographic right then we need to think well how can we get

them to get their classes and online makes a lot of sense does right and so what we do see and what seems to be you know the majority of students is this sort of combination right it's

cobbling together of face-to-face classes with an online component to it for everybody right so if you're taking three classes maybe student a is taking two face-to-face one online student B

he's maybe two online face to face but it seems to be a combination of all of it and so we need to be able to do a good job offering these to these classes we don't I mean as much as we love you right yeah what you here forever right yeah and you don't want to be here for it of course you know I mean we got it we got to make it work yeah but we have to make it work and maintain standards so you guys are actually learning something as well you know and

the only way I mean the only way I can know that you're learning is by doing

the work so I make you work.

**Patrick:**

I'm gonna ask a different question here to get to know a little bit about you so imagine you're stranded on a desert island but all of your needs are taking care of like food water shelter all your basic stuff taking care what two items would you bring with you can they be living things yeah absolutely my family my wife and my son and hopefully we won't you know drive each other crazy

**Patrick:**

so I remember we had a conversation a little while back where you were traveling around Asia was it?

**Mark:**

Oh yeah last summer where did you where did you go I went well you know as we talked why

teach Japanese yeah yeah wife is Japanese and you know Japan has a big part of my life Japan you know Japan is always like a jumping-off point whenever I travel mm-hmm so there's the Japan jump off but I went to I went to Vietnam and Cambodia and Malaysia hmm how was how was Vietnam being almost fun you know I I'm a little bit older than you know yeah you know I remember the Vietnam wars yeah is there still kind of like that stigma around traveling to Vietnam as an American not at all no that's that's one of the really cool things yeah and there are museums where you can learn about well it's done it's not called the Viet the Vietnam War over there yeah do you know what where it's go no I don't what is it that's called what makes a lot of sense it's the American War oh yeah okay and so they have you know museums of the American War but the other thing demographically I think if you look at Vietnam I think I

mean sixty percent or more the people are under 20 you're under 30 oh wow very young country right and so it's it's a very vibrant vibrant place and at least you know mopeds and just a lot of people who are really interested and very engaged and I had a student when I taught before I came here as teaching in Japan and I sort of was the manager of this what you

call sort of like an international cafe but not like the type of cafe where you'd be drinking coffee yeah more like a Study Center okay so all of the internet is a big big Japanese

University yeah we had 60,000 students there so I got that and so we had you know a couple hundred international students and one of the students who

kind of worked for me he taught Vietnamese to the students who wanted to learn Vietnamese his name was bootchie bootchie bootch on great guy and boots on every time I talk to boots I see oh you got to come to Danang you got to come tonight such a fun place you could

have a great time and so it always stuck in the back of my head and then my friend my colleague teaches physics right he had for the last couple years he's been spending his summers out and out Southeast Asia I said go hang out have a good time so I made sure I

contacted Bhutan before we went to Vietnam and he got us our hotel and pretty much got us all set and then from from Vietnam which we had a great time although I got sick on the way ooh but it was perfect because the hotel was just wonderful and I could just rest and

work of course yeah I was working I was teaching online oh okay yeah awesome and then we flew to Cambodia and Cambodia was just I couldn't words really do not I cannot do

justice to how amazing it was.

**Patrick:**

Okay cool so we're running out of time here so that just about wraps it up thank you Mark!

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