**Intro:**

Ladies and gentlemen boys and girls welcome to the class act that kawaii

Community College the show that highlights camp is happening 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

**Gary:**

I'm sitting here with Kumu Dennis Chun, one of our Hawaiian studies teachers. How are you doing Dennis?

**Dennis:**

Ah, doing good so far so good today so good had a good class this morning so everything's going fine!

**Gary:**

What is a good class for you? How do you define a good class?

**Dennis:**

Oh well to be a good class has to engage you know students are active, they're asking questions, they're laughing at my jokes, you know just kind of engaged and having a good time being able to dialogue. Yeah I'm not a real lecture type of a teacher or you know professor if you want to say that but more of a talk story yeah so I like to talk story and and kind of connect things that you know students may not think may be connected but are you know so we had a good class today you know we talked about pidgin English yeah one class was today today was Hawaiian studies 107 Hawaii setting up the Pacific yeah and we're talking about Hawaiian language and English and how the Hawaiian language you know kind of got suppressed and why why was English became how did English become so dominant and then what is the role of pidgin you know how to pidgin evolve and and you know stuff like thaso it was really good because it'ssomething that they you know they speak many of our students speak so we're

laughing and joking around oh you're this word you're that work you know oh my grandfather used to talk like this and you know so it's really kind of fun and and then you bring the historical context into it you know so they understand oh that's why it happened you know so yeah I was really glad fun class today

**Gary:**

Now most of your classes are from what I know from students talking to me right I hope so

do you teach the Hawaiian Ohana is another one it's that way that one's kind of a little bit more introspective in a sense we look at the Hawaiian family how it related to each other in more traditional times and some of the practices and then look at how it's evolved in time through time and maybe what is it now and what I have the students do is kind of look at their own families?

**Dennis:**

Yeah and hopefully it's safe well I try and make it a safe place so that they can share things about their family and certain practices or certain beliefs and how that ties in to their everyday life you know without feeling threatened about I'm going to share too much you know so everything is kind of would you say secret I don't say well… confidential yeah so it's confidential what we share class stays in the class here and end and there are some things I have them do a journal so some of the I tell them that the journals are also confidential so it's just a matter of them communicating with me and you know if you don't I'mnot gonna share it with anybody and it's just for you to kind of even look at introspectively at your own family and your own practices and things like that so and then we look at you know why has it changed from maybe in the early 1800s yeah you know how did it change when you were teaching right yeah I can tell this from experience not so I would be I would be remiss if I didn't talk about your passion in the class that you teach the head your heart oh yeah yeah the voyaging class you have to do voyaging classes and we look at wayfinding and management navigation and Polynesians voyaging throughout the Pacific you know they say populating the largest nation you know 8 million or a million square miles of Pacific Ocean you don't scattered islands you know then it's a very engaging story yeah it's like a theoretical for you right could you know expiry time that's yeah yeah we've got some experience yeah and you know probably more experiences to come here but um you have event experiences on a number of voyaging canoes Hokulea of course being the mama you know the mother of modern Polynesian voyaging and then also on are and in Hawaii law as far as the Hawaii canoes and I'm still a little bit with more tomorrow our tour down in Cook Islands and stuff like that and you know out there or one in New Zealand you

know so just small things but you always learned so much every time you go out you know.

**Gary:**

My understanding is that this is very much a hands-on class yes we have a canoe that's in the water and one that's being ready right?

**Dennis:**

Exactly so we have no more in the water but unfortunately not more we're gonna be pulling out of the water soon I hope I'm just doing regular you know maintenance kind of things I mean we've been in the water for four years already so this little things growing on the hulls now you’ve got to kind of clean them off some things have kind of worn away or got broke in and we have to replace and think you know stuff like that sounds like me yeah but yeah so that's coming out and then we guess getting toward the end of finishing our 30-foot training sailing canoe yeah a double-hulled sailing canoe so we should be in the water I'm shooting for April

sometime around there so that's like a couple of months away now as we talk about we're talking about construction from scratch to completion right so Noma Hawaii was constructed from scratch like a basic cement floor and I saw we had you know basically abundant flow ready to build the forms was to build a strong back with you know handily although the or you know

planks and grass all of that you know it was you know zero right with those Jenko we got a little smarter and somebody else build the halls for us and then we just have to do the decks and the superstructure and stuff like that so so when your classes go in the water are they up for an hour they out for a day um what I'm planning is that we'll be out for at least half a day so we'll have classes during the week and then we'll have a blocker on Saturdays I'm looking at yeah you know so clinic this sounds like so much fun oh yeah you know and yeah that's gonna be fun you know.

You know the difference between hearing about it and reading about it and talking about it and then actually being out on the water with your ropes or hands on the ropes is just such a and it

gives meat today our dialog in the classroom right right it does you know because all of the things that you know especially on the science side, yeah those stem side you might math and all these kinds of things and it brings life to it right you know you're not just dealing with a formula you're dealing with actual movement, yeah you know the actual stress you're

doing with actual you know how do you say the physics of it actually happening you know it's not just physics but the physical the physical-ness yeah so it's fun yeah cuz you're realizing it doesn't matter how hard you tighten the rope when the waves are slapping you around

now you got a whole different struggle with your own physics yeah exactly you know and then is it good to tighten the ropes yeah and that kind of stage you know so you know it's experiential you know but you can bring it back into the classroom all the time, yeah but all of this is how to the where to with the navigation and everything like that is a whole different study and knowledge base right you know so that one you know it gives them that

that opportunity to understand how it was done and if they really are engaged with that and want to pursue that then we have some avenues that they can pursue to kind of do that whether it's

with normal boy hopefully, you know in the coming years we'll do a long voyage or with other

voyaging canoes hokulea is planning you know some voyages to and other

buckle here on the Big Island there are others you know we have a

The community of voyagers now you know and I tell my students is I said you know when

I was born and when I was going to school and oh now it does no such thing

as voyaging canoe there's nothing you know we don't know anything about it right you folks have been born into a time where this is entities exist you know and they're actually at work and they actually are working out there and saving and moving so you guys are in a

The very prime position you know to experience and to carry on this knowledge it's almost Jurassic Park-like the fact that it existed once went away and now it's outback yeah exactly you

know and the thing the interesting thing is that what we've learned is very much valuable in today's society you know then we think you we think my and I we have my GPS I have

married my nav charts I got my computers and all these kind of things well you

know we started what 11 years ago 12 almost 12 years ago we started a program with the Japan maritime colleges and there you know if you know Japan right they’re kind of like top-notch in technology I mean they're up there so all of their nav stuff is all high technology kinds of things where there are charts computers you know GPS whatever right but they felt that their students were missing out on just understanding what is navigation what is the basics of

navigation and how do you do that without instruments yeah there's a very interesting part I've worked with some top-notch navigators and sailors before and at the end of the day the tactician has a sense yeah he has a feeling, yeah and it doesn't come down to zeros and ones and it doesn't come down to what the computer said to do there's a sense that says there's a breeze building over there I can see it I could feel it yeah yeah yeah and that's true

you know and you know so with it and then also on the site at the same sense right you know on many commercial ships you know there's always power glitches there's always power outages these things where you got to reboot things or whatever's right so the impetus of that

program studying was knowing that what happens what do you do if the power goes out and your computer goes out and your whatever and you got to rely on what you see around you that's when you call the old salt the guy walking around right so that's why the program silent it's still going on you know I mean and the students find it valuable you know those students come here to correct oh yeah so Japan just come here and they're here for like two

and a half weeks and we do you know one other besides the navigation stuff

is English English practice that again practices English yes actually so what we

do we teach your pigeon right you get the point across and fewer words and stuff like that but they had a little pigeon and Hawaii phrases got a party-ready to go back and they use it all this Hawaiian and pidgin phrases and we do the same thing we send some of our students there we have a couple of times and but they've gone more than a technical side they've gone

look on the electronic side and but not necessarily the navigation they learning

pidgin Japanese when they go I don't know I see the way they come back but you know we haven't generated that back and forth as much yet yeah and part of it is just because of the language so their focus on maritime engineering maritime practices and you

know those kinds of areas occupational areas you know whereas we were kind of

broad yeah but yeah so that program started there you know talking about what you're seeing if the old salt that feels it you know there's a lot of stories about that oh let's see you know the best one that I know of is this happened with a theory which is the New Zealand canoe the first sailed from New Zealand to the Cook Islands and this was

an in Rarotonga this is for the Pacific arts festival that was in Rarotonga in that year so they left first time for them the first-time deep-sea first-time outs out of a side of land right and so they had mal with their mouth was our a teacher from sorrow wall, yeah and so they went out and was pretty good the first couple days they ran into a storm right so they had still had communication with New Zealand so they were talking to the New Zealand weather

forecaster guy tower and the forecast was telling them to head south and go around the next storm that was coming up and sorry the smile what do you think we go south who most said no good north but the weatherman said goes out to get around it no go north so they made a decision we will follow the weatherman right so they went south and the storm turned

and just you know boom and then when they have seen videos of that who it's not mad I was like oh boy it is cold right now it's cold they just got hammered for

like three days you know close the sales and just wrote it out and now talking

tomorrow after his mouth closed I think I died so can they cannot let up

a little bit and then the crew guys asked Mao which direction shall we go is it I told you already

north so they turned north so does it turn north they said within six hours the sky was clear you know Caesar all mellow both we learned don't you know don't forget the old knowledge right well

**Gary:**

Thank you, Dennis, it's a pleasure sitting and talking and I appreciate you

talking.

**Dennis:**

Okay thank you very much okay have a good day

**Outro:**

Thank you for listening to the class act at Kauai Community College the views and opinions shared by the hosts and any guests are solely theirs and do not reflect the feelings or opinions of cool is an institution if you enjoyed listening to this podcast us our professor check out the other episodes with different professors. Aloha!