

Tragedy to Triumph: Utilizing a Graphic Novel and Instructional Design to Sustain the Culture, Heritage and Resilience of a Community

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Abstract

Arts, design and education can powerfully combine to create relevant and impactful place- and community-based educational resources that engage interdisciplinary approaches and perspectives. This study will discuss the multiple setbacks, including COVID-19 upon a community, and explores how an original graphic novel about a 19th century labor advocate is utilized to educate and promulgate the heritage, culture and resilience of the area. The Hāmākua Coast of Hawai‘i island has a long history of migration from Asia and Europe since the 18th century. Workers from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Portugal were recruited for the numerous sugarcane plantations. However, the once thriving region has been impacted economically and emotionally with the demise of the sugar industry, highway infrastructure, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Community organizations pivoted and addressed food security. The community also came together in resiliency when it honored the legacy of Katsu Goto in 1994, building a memorial, and annually commemorating him as an early champion of labor, not a victim of racism and oppression when he was lynched and hung in 1889 for his advocacy of plantation laborers. This qualitative study reveals the instructional design of utilizing a graphic novel about Goto to create an educational module with the aim of creating important connections and a sense of place, pride, and healing for a community experiencing adversity. An instructional design model guided five instructors with the module design and a motivational model provides the framework to analyze the data collected. This study is intended to contribute to sustaining the heritage, culture and resilience of the region and give insight to others.

Keywords: Graphic Novel, Heritage Culture and Resilience of a Community, Instructional and Motivational Design

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Introduction

The last sugar plantation in Hawaii, which was Alexander & Baldwin's Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar (HC&S) company, closed down in 2016 in Pu'unene Maui (Keany, 2016). As labor costs increased and less costly sources of sugar increased, most of the sugar plantation companies in Hawai'i had already closed down in the 1990s or earlier. On Hawai'i island, Hilo Coast Processing and Hāmākua Sugar both closed in 1994, and Ka'u Sugar, the last sugar company on the island, subsequently closed in 1996 (Associated Press, 1996). Their closures ended over 160 years of sugar's reign upon the islands.

But back in the 1800s, about 185 years ago, during the mid to late 19th and early 20th centuries, the production of the lucrative and successful sugarcane was "king sugar" throughout the major islands of Hawai'i that began as a labor-intensive sugar plantation system of repression that dominated agriculture and Hawai'i's economy (Keany, 2016).

Most of the laborers during this time period were from Asia - China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines - and they were committed to a three-year contract. A majority were from Japan; by 1924, over 200,000 Japanese nationals were living in Hawai'i from many prefectures in Japan (Odo & Sinoto, 1985).

However, Europeans also migrated to Hawai'i. Over 25,000 Portuguese nationals, mostly from Madeira and the Azores, but some from mainland Portugal, were recruited for the sugar plantations starting in 1878 (Felix, 1978). There were also 8,000 migrants from Southern Spain who worked on the sugar plantations from 1907 to 1913; Hawai'i was a gateway for them and they eventually ended up settling in California (Albertos, 2019).

A Brief Summary of early Japanese Migrant Katsu Goto

The researcher wrote a graphic novel *Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story* (Iwasaki & Berido, 2010, 2011, 2022) about Katsu Kobayakawa Goto, a Japanese national who was a labor recruit aboard the ship *City of Tokio* and arrived in Hawai'i in 1885. He was part of the first group of *Kanyaku Imin* (First Ship Immigrants), Japanese laborers under a government agreement between Japan and Hawai'i to work on the prosperous sugar cane plantations in the Kingdom of Hawai'i (Odo & Sinoto, 1985).

He was educated and as the oldest son in his family, it was necessary for him to be adopted in name only by the Goto family in order to leave Japan and emigrate to Hawai'i. After being processed at the Hawaiian Board of Immigration on O'ahu, Goto was assigned to the Soper, Wright & Co. sugar plantation near Honoka'a on Hawai'i island. The work was extremely demanding and living conditions were poor. After his three-year contract was completed, he opened up a general store in Honoka'a and became the first Japanese store owner. Prices were competitive and he stocked Japanese groceries and merchandise from O'ahu that helped ease the settling of the Japanese immigrants (Beekman, 1984, 1989; Iwasaki & Berido, 2010, 2011, 2022; Kaya, 1988; Kubota, 1985).

The store quickly became a gathering place for the fledgling migrant Japanese community. Due to his English proficiency and leadership skills, Goto became a community leader and mediator between Japanese plantation workers and management at Honoka'a (Overend) Plantation. He advocated for improved working conditions and wages by serving as the liaison and interpreter. Just as quickly, Goto's business success and labor facilitation made

him a target as an instigator of worker unrest (Beekman, 1984, 1989; Iwasaki, 1994; Iwasaki & Berido, 2010, 2011, 2022; Kubota, 1985).

Goto, 27, was unfortunately lynched, killed and hung on a telephone pole on October 28, 1889, a short four years after his arrival for being a champion for sugar plantation worker rights and dignity (Beekman, 1984, 1989; Kubota, 1985). While Goto's story highlights the racial, economic and social injustice in Hawai'i's plantation society over 130 years ago, it also features the significant narrative of the Japanese American experience and Hawai'i's labor and social evolution within American history. Goto is represented in anime form on the cover and throughout the graphic novel in Figure 1 below.

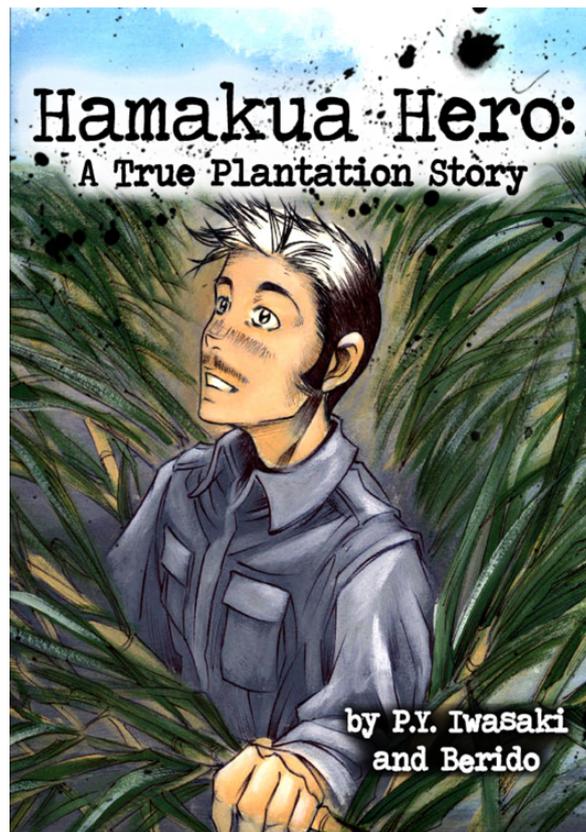


Figure 1: Katsu Goto is represented in anime form on the cover of the graphic novel.

Now he is being honored and remembered for his courage and action and the researcher is utilizing his story as a Hawai'i place based, educational resource that can sustain culture and encourage resilience. With a focus on the area's diverse immigrant history, the researcher sought to encourage academic success, growth and resilience among students through this culturally-relevant, community-based resource.

Literature Review

The University of Hawai'i system seeks to be a leader in indigenous education and each of its 10 campus sites are located in communities with a unique, historically-rich and culturally-diverse environment. The 2021-2031 UH Hilo Strategic Plan Mission and Vision states: "The UH Hilo *'ohana* (family)inspires learning, discovery, and innovation in unique environments that challenge each student to reach their academic, personal and professional goals. Our *kuleana* (responsibility) is to improve the quality of life of our diverse campus community, the people of Hawai'i Island, the state, the Pacific region and the world."

The campus also supports cultivating and sustaining teaching practices that reflect a diverse, multicultural university that is rooted in the rich mix of Native Hawaiian, Asia-Pacific, local, national and international cultures that represent Hawai‘i and its faculty are encouraged to add Hawai‘i-based resources to their curriculum as outlined in Goal 2: Strengthen Our Commitment Goal 2: Strengthen Our Commitment to ‘Āina (land) - and Community-based Education. The goal and vision states: “Through partnership and discovery our students succeed and our academic programs flourish within the context of a vibrant Hawaiian place of learning. Partnership translates into ideas, collaborative learning and research, reciprocal relationships that make a difference in the local, regional, and global lives of people, and contributes to a resilient and sustainable future for Hawai‘i.”

The researcher’s graphic novel *Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story* about Goto as discussed above is a creative and academic endeavor that adds an educational, sustainable, culturally relevant, place-based instructional resource about Hawai‘i history.

Culturally relevant, place-based education has been a growing pedagogical movement for many years. Gloria Ladson-Billings introduced a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy theoretical framework back in 1995 which has been adapted and extended by many researchers, including Shelly Brown-Jeffy and Jewel Cooper in 2011. *Place- and community-based education in schools* by Smith and Sobel (2010) proposed engaging students in communities to better confront and seek solutions for social and environmental problems, and Hawai‘i authors and researchers have also explored this approach (Chappel, 2018; Goodyear-Ka'opua, 2013; Ledward & Takayama, 2009).

Moll et al. (1992) discussed how storytelling can encourage students to voice their own history, culture and personal knowledge to become experts of their own experiences and knowledge. Paris and Alim in 2014 discussed culturally sustaining pedagogy as the foundation for tolerance and respect by incorporating identity and culture, which can also address systemic inequalities.

San Pedro and Kinloch in 2014 and 2017 claimed that exchanging stories is central to educational research and that stories can establish more inclusive, interconnected and decolonizing methodologies. Also in three articles Campano, Stornaiuolo and Thomas (Campano & Stornaiuolo, 2018; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2018; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2018) discuss how collective knowledge and storytelling are able to address long standing systemic violence and oppression and help students become agents of change.

Current Study

This current study addresses how the once thriving region of the Hāmākua Coast of Hawai‘i island has been impacted economically and emotionally by the following 3 elements:

1. Closure of the sugar plantations. As labor costs increased and less costly sources of sugar increased, all of the sugar plantations in Hawaii shut down. The last two sugar plantations along the Hāmākua Coast shut down in 1994 (Associated Press, 1996).
2. Highway infrastructure. The building of the Daniel K. Inouye Highway, completed in 2013 and 2017 significantly impacted the community. Local residents and visitors can now bypass the entire region to and from the east and west sides of the island, severely decreasing economic opportunities.

3. COVID-19 pandemic. After the closure of the sugar plantations, the majority of residents began to commute to the west side of the island, to the visitor locations of Waikoloa and Kailua Kona, to work in the visitor industry. These residents were furloughed or let go when the hotels, restaurants and activities were shut down due to the pandemic. Community organizations pivoted and then addressed food security, demonstrating resilience.

The community also came together in resiliency in 1994, the same year the Hāmākua Coast sugar plantations closed down, when it honored the legacy of Katsu Goto. They built a memorial, and annually commemorate him as an early champion of labor, not a victim of racism and oppression when he was lynched and hung in 1889 for his advocacy of plantation laborers (Iwasaki, 1995). Since 1994, for 27 years, a memorial service has been held with activities to honor his legacy and bring attention to other current issues of social justice today. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual commemorations were held (Honoka‘a Hongwanji Mission).

The organizers put a lot of thought into the building of the memorial with elements honoring both Japan and Hawaii, two cultures brought together through migration. As shown in Figure 2 below, the column to the left of the memorial is made of hinoki, Japanese cypress wood, and stones from Japan; and the blue tiles are done using a traditional Japanese style. Elements from Hawaii are on the right: the column is made of ‘ōhi‘a wood and a large lava rock from nearby Waipi‘o Valley secures the base. The tiles have a sugarcane motif design at the ends and the plaque honors Katsu Goto’s legacy.



Figure 2: The memorial built in Honoka‘a in 1994 commemorating Goto’s legacy features elements from both Hawai‘i and Japan.

Research Design

In this qualitative study, the ADDIE model of instructional design helped guide the participants, five instructors utilizing the graphic novel *Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story* in their classes, with the design of educational lesson plans and modules to encourage academic success and understand Hawai‘i history and culture. Two of the instructors were appropriately from the Hāmākua area, an important factor for the study, as the purpose of the study was to help sustain the culture, heritage and resilience of this community through the graphic novel. The analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation process of ADDIE aimed to create important connections and a sense of place, pride, healing and resilience for a community experiencing adversity.

ADDIE Model of Instructional Design

While applying educational best practices, the ADDIE model of instructional design (Allen, 2006; Dick et al., 2001; McGriff, 2000; Molenda, 2015; Molenda et al., 1996; Serhat, 2017) systematically guided and organized the study’s learning design process of the instructional modules and lesson plans. During the development phase, formative assessments were conducted with the five experienced educators.

This process was selected because it systematically organized the study’s instructional and learning design approach and procedures extremely well. The ADDIE phases of analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation were appropriately applied to the study’s process.

With its origins as an instructional tool for the military, the ADDIE model has expanded to become a successful and popular systematic instructional design process for performance, job training and educational settings because it provides a “dynamic, flexible guideline for developing effective and efficient instruction,” (McGriff, 2000, p. 1).

Many studies have successfully applied the ADDIE model in both qualitative studies, with smaller samplings, and quantitative studies, with larger samplings, in the United States and the world in a wide variety of educational settings including K-12, undergraduate students, graduate students, library instruction, technological and vocational students, and with workforce training (Allen, 2006). Figure 3 below features a representation of the ADDIE model instructional design process used in this study.

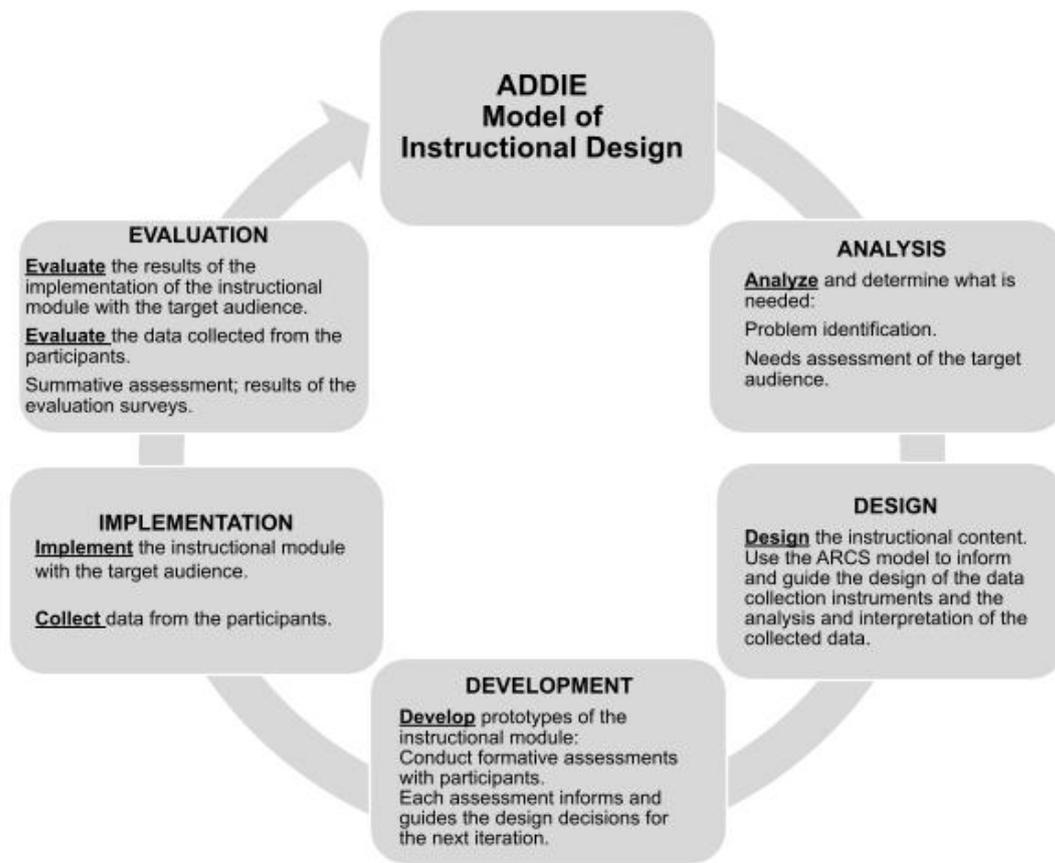


Figure 3: Representation of the ADDIE model design process used in this study.

During the ADDIE process of this study, the researcher learned that teachers are admirably committed to applying educational best practices to meet the instructional guidelines and goals while meeting the challenging needs of their students. They have to work together with their grade levels, but are also quite autonomous and independent. The researcher's initial plan was to work together through the iterative ADDIE design process to create a uniform lesson plan or module. However, the researcher strategically shifted to work with the educators who understandably wanted the freedom to adapt and adjust modules and lesson plans to fit their own class and student needs. For example, one teacher taught classes with Advanced Placement students who disliked group work because they usually ended up doing all of the work; another enjoyed assigning group work; and another instructor dealt with alternative learning students with whom the typical academic research paper or essay would not result in successful outcomes.

ARCS Model of Instructional Design

To increase the likelihood that the lesson plans and modules would resonate with the target audience - students at the intermediate, high school and college levels - the study's design was based on a well-established model in motivation and instructional design: the ARCS model (Keller, 1983, 2010, 2017; Peterson, 2003; Pappas, 2015). The ARCS acronym stands for the instructional motivational factors of: attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction. Table 1 below features Keller's ARCS model concepts and definitions.

The ARCS model guided the design and development of the study’s instruments, the interview questions for the participants, to ensure they addressed the topic from the four ARCS perspectives: attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction (Gagne, et al., 2005). To ensure the interview questions obtained useful data, including drawing out the rich and thick descriptions of qualitative data (Creswell, 2018; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Yin, 2016), another instructor familiar with the topic reviewed the questions and they were revised before implementation. This provided an inter-rater reliability check.

The ARCS model informed the process of the design and development of:

- 1) the data collection instruments in the study,
- 2) the educational lesson plans and modules, and
- 3) the interpretation and analysis of the data collected.

Besides the helpful data collected through field notes and observations during the ADDIE instructional design process, the researcher felt the best way to collect data for this study was to conduct in-depth interviews with the five participants, teachers at the high school and university levels. This applied the triangulation method of data collection to increase credibility and validity (Bryman, 2012; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Yin, 2016). The ARCS model framework helped the researcher align the interview questions with the ARCS motivational factors (Gagne, et al., 2005; Keller & Suzuki, 2014), and also categorize the data to enable important and meaningful findings and outcomes during analysis and interpretation.

Keller’s ARCS Model Concepts and Definitions
Attention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capturing interest and curiosity ● Perception and by inquiry ● Connection and participation ● Specific, relatable examples; conflict and variety
Relevance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Immediate application ● Set example through experience ● Set example through role models ● Future usefulness
Confidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enable self-confidence ● Facilitate self-growth ● Give learners control ● Ability to provide feedback
Satisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Immediate application of information ● Useful application in the future ● Acquire real world knowledge and skills ● Enable positive outcomes

Table 1: Keller’s ARCS model concepts and definitions.

Results

During the ADDIE process, the researcher learned the participants are admirably committed to applying educational best practices to meet the instructional guidelines and goals while meeting the challenging needs of their students. They work together with their grade levels, but also work independently to develop their lesson plans and modules to accomplish this. The researcher's initial plan was to work together through the iterative ADDIE design process to create uniform lesson plans or modules. However, the researcher strategically shifted to work with the educators who understandably wanted the freedom to adapt and adjust modules and lesson plans to fit their own classes and meet the needs of their wide and varied students' needs. For example, on one end of the spectrum was a teacher who taught classes with Advanced Placement students; and at the other end was a teacher who only worked with alternative learning students.

After completing the ADDIE instructional design process, analysis and interpretation of the data collected provided significant results. The five teachers at the high school and university levels wanted to utilize the graphic novel fundamentally in two ways:

1) As a major assignment: research projects about current, relevant topics such as immigration, diversity, culture and social justice that encouraged students to explore place-based, culturally-relevant resources. One of the resources students were encouraged to use was *Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story* (Iwasaki & Berido, 2010, 2011, 2022).

The teachers said the assignment was very well received and the graphic novel served as a catalyst, a launching point for students to conduct research in a number of areas they were interested in. High school and college students appreciated that the graphic novel was visually appealing, historical, and the images, panels and short text moved the story and plot like a film. Some teachers wanted to give students the freedom to create their own final project platforms: a traditional paper, a script for a play, a video, or an original comic book, or other forms.

2) As a minor assignment: exercises or worksheets with multiple choice, fill in the blanks or deeper, open-ended questions.

One teacher used *Hāmākua Hero* in a module of a required "Modern History of Hawai'i" class with his alternative learning high school students. He said the content of the graphic novel really resonated with his vulnerable students. They were willing and wanting to engage with the curriculum relating to *Hāmākua Hero*. The instructor said the resource is about Hawai'i's history and his students learned about immigration to Hawai'i. After reading it, they understood how Hawai'i became a multicultural society because of labor recruitment for the sugar plantations.

He said that his students won't touch a textbook filled with words, but they opened up *Hāmākua Hero* and read it in 20 to 30 minutes. Similar to the college students, the high school students were drawn to the visuals, the images, and how the panels and short text move the story and plot like a film. Here are a few of the themes in the graphic novel that resonated with his alternative learning high school students:

Sibling Relationships

In *Hāmākua Hero*, the researcher tried to establish a relationship with Katsu Goto and his younger brother Sekijiro, since Sekijiro is the narrator for the story. Elements of Japanese culture and tradition were added; thus, in Figure 4 below the brothers are pounding steamed rice into mochi rice cakes for the New Year's holiday and Katsu surprises his brother with his news about leaving Japan to go to Hawai'i. It also adds an opportunity for some action and humor, with Sekijiro almost pounding Katsu's hand off.



Figure 4: Depicts the importance of sibling relationships and introduces Japanese culture and heritage.

The alternative learning students relate to this relationship since the sibling relationship is often so important and foundational to them. They have moved from schools, from communities and from neighborhoods; and for those in foster care, they've been removed from their parents, and from their families. Often, it's the siblings against the parent or parents, against the family, against the world. Siblings have to be able to rely on each other, especially if there's any type of abuse involved.

Control over their own Lives

This page (see Figure 5 below) when Katsu Goto opens his general store resonates with the students. They long for control, they long to be the "boss" of their own lives. They have often had to be at the mercy of an unstable family life - they sometimes don't know where they're

going to sleep at night, or where their next meal is coming, or if they'll have clean clothes to go to school. They're often handed off to this friend, that friend, this aunty, that uncle; they have no control in their lives. The instructor said it's rewarding for them to see Goto finally be successful and open up his store.



Figure 5: Depiction of Goto and his general store in 1888 in Honoka'a, Hawai'i island.

When the researcher asked the teacher about the unfairness and violence in the story - how Goto is ambushed and lynched after meeting with Japanese workers he is trying to assist, he said the students can wholeheartedly relate to it. It encourages them to practice resilience. See Figure 6 and 7 below. He said they are faced with unfairness and violence every day. Inequity. They have often lost family members to violence or health issues. They feel that life has been unfair to them.

The teacher knows exactly when the students get to this part in the graphic novel when they are reading it in class. When they get to this part, the students' yell, put the book down, or shout out "What!" because the story takes such an unexpected turn. The instructor said that the story starts off as a typical "guy overcoming hardships," rags to riches kind of story: man comes to Hawai'i, he works hard, he opens a store, he's successful.

Then he is attacked, pulled from his horse, lynched and hung on a telephone pole. The teacher tells me that the students are literally and emotionally thrown off a cliff by the story.

They can't believe it. However, at the same time, they also do believe it. He tells them it's a true story.



Figure 6 and 7: Depiction of the violence in this true story that encourages resilience.

Although this tragic lynching happens, the teacher emphasized that *Hāmākua Hero's* impact on the students is so very positive and impactful. Yes, what happens to Goto is horrific, unfair and unjust, but that is just what catches their attention, he said. The teacher emphasizes that the takeaway for the students is that he was a good person. He lived a good life. He worked hard. He helped others. They realize that because of what happened to him, they can actually read about him now. If the lynching didn't happen, he would just be another interesting migrant story; one of many.

There's a memorial in Honoka'a and people can learn about him. They also learn about resilience from Goto's story. The teacher shared that students make that connection and conclusion. That good has come out of this story. Perhaps if they try hard, complete high school, graduate, practice resilience, and do good, good can come into their lives.

The outcome of this study was very positive and significant. *Hāmākua Hero* was used in high school and university research papers as a resource that helped students explore current, relevant topics such as immigration, diversity, culture and social justice. The feedback from the high school teacher who taught alternative learning students was surprising and inspiring for the researcher who learned that the story really resonated with and had a positive impact upon his students. It was so very helpful to know that *Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story* can indeed be used in place-based, cultural curriculum in Hawai'i, and possibly elsewhere in this way.

Conclusion and Further Research

This study successfully and innovatively applied and integrated social and learning sciences theory to humanities, arts, design and education research. The overall goal of this study was to engage interdisciplinary approaches and perspectives to combine arts, design and education to explore how a relevant place-and community-based educational resource could impact students, encourage academic success, and contribute to sustaining the heritage, culture and resilience of a region and give insight to others.

The Hāmākua Coast of Hawai'i island has a long history of migration from Asia and Europe since the 18th century. Workers from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Portugal were recruited for the numerous sugarcane plantations. However, the once thriving region of the Hāmākua Coast of Hawai'i island has been impacted economically and emotionally with the demise of the sugar industry, highway infrastructure, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Community organizations pivoted and addressed food security. The community also came together in resiliency when it honored the legacy of Katsu Goto in 1994 by building a memorial, and annually commemorating him as an early champion of labor, not a victim of racism and oppression when he was lynched and hung in 1889 for his advocacy of plantation laborers.

This qualitative study revealed the ADDIE instructional design process (Allen, 2006; Dick et al., 2001; McGriff, 2000; Molenda et al., 2017) that guided five teachers utilizing the original graphic novel about Goto, *Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story* (Iwasaki & Berido, 2010, 2011, 2022), in their classes. The purpose was to create lesson plans and modules that would not only fulfill educational policies and guidelines, but also create important connections and a sense of place, pride, and healing for a community experiencing adversity. A motivational model, the ARCS model (Keller, 1983, 2010, 2017; Peterson, 2003; Pappas, 2015), provided the framework to analyze and interpret the data collected.

Participants said the assignment was very well received and *Hāmākua Hero* served as a catalyst, a launching point for students to conduct research in a number of areas they are interested in. Students appreciate that the graphic novel is visually appealing, historical, and the images, panels and short text move the story and plot like a film.

After completing the ADDIE instructional design process, and analysis and interpretation were completed, the teachers wanted to utilize the graphic novel fundamentally in two ways: 1) As a major assignment: research projects about current, relevant topics such as immigration, diversity, culture and social justice that encouraged students to explore place-based, culturally-relevant resources with *Hāmākua Hero* as one of the sources; and 2) As a minor assignment: exercises or worksheets with multiple choice, fill in the blanks or deeper, open-ended questions. The results were significant in confirming that *Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story* can indeed be used in place-based, cultural curriculum in Hawai‘i and possibly elsewhere.

However, the results discussed in this article are not yet complete since data collection for this study will continue for another semester. In the Fall 2022 semester, the five educators will continue to use *Hāmākua Hero* in their classes and six more teachers will be utilizing the graphic novel in curriculum and instruction. Four of the additional teachers who will be participating in the study are from Honoka‘a Intermediate and High School. This is a welcome development as the purpose of the study is to encourage academic success, understand Hawai‘i history and sustain the culture, heritage and resilience of this region and community. The researcher looks forward to collecting more data that may contribute to the sustainability of the cultural legacy of the community to the next generation, which is an energizing and motivating goal.

Looking forward, this effective and dynamic interdisciplinary approach of combining arts, design and education to create relevant and impactful place- and community-based instructional resources is an important and significant contribution to the fields of the learning sciences and the humanities. This may influence and impact the broad possibilities of interdisciplinary and intersectional research design and collaboration, an integral part of living and learning in a thriving, multicultural global society.

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