Humanities Education and Film: Building a Network Between Hawai‘i and Japan

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Abstract

The documentary film genre is a powerful and influential information and communication medium that has become extremely popular and well-received with all audiences, including educational settings. The documentary film’s accessibility to broad and diverse audiences with its appeal, relevance and immediacy, can increase understanding, scholarship, action and engagement in a connected world. It has become widely recognized and utilized successfully in educational practice. Creating a documentary film requires many steps, and there are some guidelines, but there are no fixed rules or procedures. In fact, there is a notable lack of information and inadequate educational resources on the “research and collection” step, which is crucial to the documentary film process after the subject has been selected. Both academic and popular sources lack information about researching and collecting data, the fundamental core for a documentary film. Therefore, this research article will discuss the possibility of designing a diverse, open, and connected learning resource network for a documentary film that will be used as a place-based, locally-relevant instructional resource for educational practice in humanities education. The article will focus on the path and research that has led the educator researcher to design and develop a learning resource network that spans two countries, Hawai‘i and Japan, for the production of a documentary film on early Japanese immigrant Katsu Goto, who emigrated to Hawaii‘i as a sugar plantation worker in 1885 and was unfortunately lynched and killed in 1889 because of his labor advocacy and mediation between plantation workers and management.

Keywords: Japanese immigration to Hawai‘i, documentary film, learning resource network place-based, locally-relevant instructional resource, Arts-Based Research

“The arts can do so much more - they can connect us with those who are similar and dissimilar, open up new ways of seeing and experiencing, and illuminate that which otherwise remains in darkness” (Leavy, p. ix).

Film ideas are purposefully floating in the air, searching for someone who will give birth to them. “The birth mother raises and becomes a servant to that film until it’s on its own; who won’t abort or abandon that idea, but carry it to delivery. It’s really a privilege. That’s why it’s servanthood and motherhood. You’re in service to the film and it’s something bigger than yourself. You are bringing to fruition an important idea that needs to be materialized,” said Stephanie J. Castillo, an EMMY award-winning filmmaker from Hawai‘i, now based on the U.S. East Coast when the educator researcher discussed the possibility of producing a documentary film as a place-based, locally-relevant instructional resource for educational practice in humanities education. (personal communication, November 29, 2016).

The film idea squarely landed on the educator researcher after three related developments over a period of 25 years. First, in 1993, since the educator researcher was interested in research
in Japan since she is of Japanese American heritage, she applied for and received the first Goto of Hiroshima Foundation research grant through the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai‘i. The grant was named in honor of Katsu Goto, who emigrated to Hawai‘i as a sugar plantation laborer aboard the ship City of Tokio in 1885, the first group of Japanese contract laborers to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. After fulfilling his three-year contract, Goto opened a general store in Honoka’a, on Hawai‘i island and became a community leader, labor advocate and, because of his English proficiency, became an indispensable mediator between Japanese plantation workers and management at Honoka’a Plantation. However, Goto quickly became a target due to his business success and labor facilitation within Hawai‘i’s racially divided and feudal system of oppression. Goto, 27, was lynched and killed on Oct. 28, 1889, a short four years after his arrival. With education, background and training in journalism and media studies, the educator researcher wrote numerous articles about Goto and Dr. Fumiko Kaya, Goto’s niece who established the Foundation that continues to award grants through the University of Hawai‘i (UH) Foundation.

Second, seeking to add to the educational resources about Hawai‘i history, in 2008, the educator researcher, who is an instructional faculty member of the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo’s Humanities Division, wrote and published a graphic novel Hāmakua Hero: A True Plantation Story as an instructional resource about Katsu Goto’s journey and life in Hawai‘i. Illustrated by artist A. Berido, the 75-page book was published in both English and Japanese in Japan in 2008. Several years later an English-only version was published by Bess Press in Hawai‘i (2010, 2011) (See Figure 1). The educator researcher and other educators have successfully utilized the graphic novel in secondary and higher education courses as a place-based, locally-relevant instructional resource for humanities education (Iwasaki & Berido, 2011; Kamalani 2012; Sagle, 2012).

![Figure 1. Cover of graphic novel Hāmakua Hero: A True Plantation Story (Iwasaki & Berido, 2011).](image)

The University of Hawai‘i at Hilo Strategic Plan Mission and Vision seeks to cultivate and sustain 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 faculty are encouraged to add Hawai‘i-based resources to curriculum (UH Hilo
Strategic Plan). The inclusion of a module about Hawai‘i history in the curriculum, using Hāmākua Hero: A True Plantation Story as one of the resources, has been very successful for the educator researcher’s courses, especially the introductory English composition courses for freshman that are a general education requirement.

Students appreciate the historical and immigration information presented in an easy-to-read graphic novel with panels of text and images that promote engagement, movement and emotional response. Students from Hawai‘i say that the information is “eye-opening” and enriching by learning about the roots and history of Hawai‘i’s multicultural diversity through immigration. Even first generation college students, whose own parents or grandparents have associations with the sugar plantations, are removed from the labor and plantation history of Hawai‘i and appreciate the information and knowledge the module brings. The assignment associated with the module encourages students to research and learn about their own ethnic and cultural immigrant history.

For example, Filipino students in the class have often researched Pablo Manlapit, a lawyer and labor leader who organized the Filipino Labor Union in Hawai‘i and led the sugar plantation strikes of 1920 and 1924 which was the inception of the labor movement in Hawaii (Kerkvliet, 2002). Students who are new to Hawai‘i also find the module extremely educational as they learn about Hawai‘i’s history and are encouraged to connect and synthesize the material with similar topics such as African Americans, black Americans, Native Americans and other marginalized ethnic, cultural and gender groups. Writing the graphic novel required many hours of research and the outcome became a useful and effective instructional strategy for educational practice about Hawai‘i’s ethnic, economic, and social history.

Lastly, the educator researcher collaborated with cinematographer Danny Miller to write, direct and produce two 4-minute educational videos about Katsu Goto featuring interviews with Honokaʻa community members and other sources for the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum’s exhibit Tradition and Transition: Stories of Hawai‘i Immigrants which ran from Nov. 2011 to May 2015 (Iwasaki & Miller, 2011-2015). The videos ran continuously below a display of Goto’s gold pocket watch, one of the museum’s prized artifacts, and the Hāmākua Hero graphic novel; pages of the novel were also enlarged and displayed in the exhibit section. Along with the graphic novel, the educator researcher has applied these short videos into her educational practice, and they have proven to be very successful supplemental place-based, locally-relevant educational sources.

After the exhibit ended, the somewhat logical “next step” instructional resource and practice concept for the educator researcher was to possibly produce a feature documentary film on Katsu Goto. She felt the graphic novel was preliminary storyboard and its pages and panels provided transitions, movement and storytelling aspects similar to film. She was also inspired to expand her academic research on Katsu Goto and apply the creative approach of documentary filmmaking, the most effective and powerful learning medium she felt that could appropriately convey and share Goto’s story, and to create an additional instructional resource for educational practice. Thus, the educator researcher’s background, ethnic and cultural heritage, education, experiences, interests, relationships and educational practices, including the graphic novel on Katsu Goto and short videos that are being utilized as instructional resources, are connected with the research process, and the lens through which this research framework is approached (Feldman, Paugh, & Mills, 2004; Laboskey, 2006; Samaras, 2010).
Documentary Film

The documentary is a genre in the motion picture, film and video media field. It is a nonfictional documentation of fact-based reality, and its purpose can be instruction, education, or historical record preservation. Aufderheide defines a documentary as a film or video that “tells a story about real life, with claims to truthfulness,” (2007, p. 2). Documentary film’s grounding in reality and facts, rather than fiction, makes it an extremely powerful, affective and influential medium, providing images, narratives, sounds and experiences that can educate, entertain, persuade, preserve culture, instill values, and motivate its viewer audience (Loustaunau & Shaw, 2018). It can provide immediate knowledge, learning, resonance and create connection in this age of technology.

The documentary film’s accessibility to broad and diverse audiences with its appeal, relevance and immediacy, can increase understanding, scholarship, action and engagement in a connected world (Friend & Caruthers, 2016; Loustaunau & Shaw, 2018). Documentary film’s acceptance and adoption in instructional practice and use in distributing information to broad and extensive audiences timely coincides with the field’s advances in accessible, low-cost, high quality equipment. Documentary film has become an extremely popular and well-received medium of communication for all audiences (Goldman, Pea, Barrow, & Derry, 2007; Loustaunau & Shaw, 2018; Winston, Vanstone & Chi, 2017). The documentary film genre is a powerful and influential information and communication medium that is widely recognized and utilized successfully in educational practice today to engage learners of all ages (Frank, 2013; Nash, Hight, & Summerhayes, 2014; Winston, et al., 2017). Documentary film has become an extremely popular and well-received medium of information and communication for all audiences, including educational and training settings (Bugis, 2018; Goldman, et al., 2007; Loustaunau & Shaw, 2018; West, Hoffman, & Costello, 2017).

Many in the documentary film field stand by the six primary types of documentaries established by Bill Nichols, a Swedish film critic, theoretician and educator, best known for founding the contemporary study of documentary film (Nichols, 2012; Biesterfeld, 2019):

- Expository – emphasizes research and aims to educate and explain using interviews, visuals, photos, graphics and with scripted narration.
- Observational - emphasizes observation with the filmmaker as a neutral observer and it often called cinema verite, direct cinema or fly-on-the-wall documentary.
- Participatory – emphasizes direct engagement between the filmmaker and subjects or documentary film.
- Reflexive – emphasizes the constructed nature of the documentary and flaunts it.
- Poetic – emphasizes the cinematic values of visuals, design, composition and rhythm over content.
- Performative – emphasizes a “being there” perspective in a location, culture or event and its impact on the audience.

Other categories may often be called by a variety of other names, but they all can generally fall under the six primary types. Some of them are: biography, sociological or ethnographic...

The documentary film began at the same time as entertainment films in the late nineteenth century in both the United States and France. At first, they were very short newsreels, instructional films, current event shorts or travelogues of exotic lands of a few minutes long and were shown at public venues, then they developed into longer, educational projects. The films were often presented with lectures and demonstrations, and quickly became an educational resource. Film technology and sound improved and national film industries in America and Europe were firmly established by 1914 (AMC Filmsite, 2018; Science + Media Museum).

Many consider Nanook of the North (1922) to be the first official film documentary. It was a non-fiction narrative film that took an ethnographic look at the harsh life of Canadian Inuit Eskimos living in the Artic by Robert J. Flaherty. Although Flaherty manipulated and staged some of the scenes by asking his subjects to recreate obsolete customs, he is regarded as the “Father of the Documentary Film,” and has been praised for Nanook, as well as Moana (1926) a documentary or “docu-fiction” about Samoan Pacific Islanders (Aufderheide, 2007; Grimshaw, 2014; AMC Filmsite, 2018). His wife Frances H. Flaherty, who was a co-director, and three daughters lived, worked with and filmed the people on the island of Savai’i in Samoa for a year with 16 tons of film equipment (Robert J. Flaherty’s Moana, 2017). As with Nanook, Flaherty took the artistic liberty of reenacting obsolete earlier practices in Samoa (Aufderheide, 2007; AMC Filmsite, 2018).

Documentary Film as Research Practice

Documentary filmmaking has a long history in social science research (Frank, 2013; Goldman, et al., 2007) including anthropology, with such terms as ethnographic film and ethnocinema (Leavy, 2015). With Internet accessibility, digital technologies, and lower production costs, documentaries have escalated and its use as a research practice across the disciplines has likewise increased (Leavy, 2015; Winston, et al., 2017). Video Research in the Learning Sciences provides a comprehensive exploration of key theoretical, methodological and technological use of documentary film in the learning sciences (Goldman et al., 2007) and New Documentary Ecologies: emerging platforms, practices and discourses reports on the research applications of the powerful and relevant medium and its recent surge in digital platforms (Nash, et al., 2014).

Frank sought to expand the educational significance, practice and application of the documentary /video (2013), Bell emphasized the importance of the genre in historiographical research and scholarship (2011), Whiteman discussed its political impact (2004) and Fonda combined art therapy and filmmaking (2014). Documentary film is now used in different research contexts and presentations using a wide range of styles and approaches, from loosely planned projects to fully storyboarding, scripted and rehearsed professional productions that require hiring a cinematographer, crew and staff, as well as a cast and actors for reenactments, and can also feature the researcher(s), participants, and other sources (Leavy, 2015; Leavy & Chilton, 2014).

Documentary film has proven to be a popular medium for researchers hoping to inspire, educate and promote knowledge and awareness of diverse issues (Aufderheide, 2007; Frank, 2013)
such as social justice to various audiences in education, from elementary to post-secondary, and beyond (Friend & Caruthers, 2016; Hanley, Noblit, Sheppard, & Barone, 2013); migration and immigration from Central and South America (Loustaunau & Shaw, 2018); to the environmental and health concerns of agricultural chemicals (The Monsanto Papers, 2018).

A fundamental component of the documentary film is featuring the life, knowledge, experience and voice of the actual participants and sources of the documentary. Often, the subject of the documentary aligns itself within a framework of social justice and social activism. With the understanding that the women from Rwanda and Bangladesh in her film about gender and genocide do not represent the incidents, gender or nations, Azra Rashid believed in the importance of allowing the survivors to speak for themselves and communicate their personal stories (2014). Similarly, seeking to explore inequities in urban public education in the United States, Friend and Caruthers believed that documentary film created opportunities for subject participants to share real, credible stories and perspectives that they hope will motivate people to bring about change and improvement (2016). The stories and narrative storytelling of the documentary “expands our understanding of shared human experience, fostering an informed, compassionate and connected world,” believes Loustaunau and Shaw (2018, p. 2).

This feature is important because the protagonist of the documentary was lynched and hung on a telephone pole in Honoka’ā for representing and advocating for Japanese sugar plantation laborers unjustly accused of setting fire to the sugar cane fields in 1889 (Iwasaki, 2011). In regards to the issue of social justice and the lynching of Katsu Goto, Gary Okihiro, author of Cane Fires: The anti-Japanese movement in Hawai‘i and American History Unbound: Asians and Pacific Islanders said:

Lynchings are not murder, it’s not execution. It is an act of terror. It’s not just for the victim. It is not to seek some of justice against an alleged perpetrator of violence or whatever. It is to teach the living a lesson and that’s why bodies were left. That’s why lynchings were spectacles. Men, women and children had picnics around a lynching in the South. They would father for that and it was a lesson. It was a lesson for those who ruled that they were in control and it was a lesson for those who were subjects, subjected to rule, that they should not cross that line or aspire to be equal to those who rule. That’s a very harsh lesson and that is terrorism. You inspire fear on the part of those dominated and to inspire fear, to be quiet, to listen, to agree with the ruling, the rulers (personal communication, May 10, 2016).

Increased accessibility to the necessary technology and lower costs for equipment also helps participant, and subject stories and experiences to be increasingly and progressively shared globally. People and voices who were in the past ignored, excluded and dismissed are now being heard, with reference to the $100 smartphone’s filming capabilities, advances in digital photography and editing along with free and low-cost software applications (Loustaunau & Shaw, 2018 Winston et al., 2017) Indeed, while one end of the documentary film spectrum lists significant, successful filmmakers such as Michael Moore, whose Fahrenheit 9/11 earned over $221 million in U.S. and international box office revenues in 2015, and Ken Burns’ The Roosevelts: An Intimate History, the other end is no less important.

Steps to a Documentary
Filmmakers claim that making a documentary is one of the most fulfilling, rewarding, yet challenging creative endeavors one can embark on. A thrilling adventure, but difficult; one with no hard and fast rules or procedures, and that a filmmaker learns by simply doing. (Desktop Documentaries, 2018). Paradoxically, filmmaker Michael Moore insists that the first step to documentary filmmaking is to not make a documentary. Instead, he emphasizes, one should make a movie. “Stop making documentaries. Start making movies. You’ve chosen this art form — the cinema, this incredible, wonderful art form, to tell your story. You didn’t have to do that.” (IndieWire, 2014, para. 1).

Whether it’s a fluid, intuitive, creative development or a step-by-step, meticulously planned process, the consensus seems to be: one needs to first make that decision, simply and quietly, and begin. There are no standard, fixed, hard and fast rules, but there are some general guidelines. (Adorama Learning Center, 2018; Desktop Documentaries, 2018; IndieWire, 2014). Although this is by no means a complete, comprehensive list and does not include many elements of the filmmaking process, including funding and budgets, here are some suggestions from several sources:

- **Step 1: Tell a “worthy” story**
  Documentaries need to be about a subject that excites the filmmaker, a “worthy” subject of interest to the filmmaker and, of course, to others. The documentary filmmaking process is formidable, so one needs a fire burning inside that is both energizing and sustaining on the long journey. The subject must be something one cares about deeply and completely, something that allows one to express personal worldview, values and beliefs (Studio Binder, 2018). While not all documentaries will be political or dangerous, Moore claims that if one wants to achieve real success, one needs to make the film with the intensity, drive and commitment as if it will be the last job one ever does in life (IndieWire, 2014).

- **Step 2: Research and collection**
  Learn everything about the documentary subject by putting on the researcher/investigator/reporter hat and find out as much as possible using digital, physical and human sources. Search out material, gather facts, follow leads and recommendations on interesting resources, take a lot of notes, conduct initial interviews, pay attention to interesting, emotional and inspiring material, and include key points that will resonate with the audience (Adorama Learning Center, 2018). The precious treasures of the film may often be hidden, buried away, and may need uncovering and revelation (Desktop Documentaries, 2018).

- **Step 3: Make a plan**
  Create a plan with an outline and think about how the story will be told; its structure and style. Search for existing footage or photos that help tell the story. Questions to ask: Who is the primary character? What are the core story points? What are the elements of the story that are compelling and/or make one “tingle” with intrigue and excitement? (Adorama Learning Center, 2018).

- **Step 4: Production**
  Create a detailed plan to shoot and film the documentary film: 1) interviews, 2) B-roll, supplemental footage that helps to tell the story, and 3) reenactments or recreations if applicable.

- **Step 5: Write a script**
Once all of the footage has been filmed, production elements covered, including the necessary audio, video and other material, and the interviews transcribed, the script needs to be developed and written. “Pinpoint the most compelling elements of your story and start crafting chapters and mini-scenes around those events” (Adorama Learning Center, 2018).

- **Step 6: Edit**
  Using computers and video editing software, it is time to cut, edit and paste the footage into sequences of the documentary film according to the script. Sources say that the art to editing is to keep the audience on its toes by creating a roller coaster ride of emotion, with some parts fast and quick, and other parts slow, meaningful and deep, in order to create a dynamic viewing experience (Adorama Learning Center, 2018; Desktop Documentaries, 2018).

- **Step 7: Distribute**
  From theaters to television, DVD to digital, and today’s direct streaming media platforms, there are greater opportunities and challenges in film and video distribution. The distribution process is its own myriad web including hiring a distributor or self-marketing and other decisions (Studio Binder, 2018).

### Lack of Subject Research and Data Collection Information

Yet both academic and popular sources reveal a lack of information and inadequate educational resources on how to conduct research and collect data for documentary film. Educational resources in this study refers to the information, instruction, tools or processes on how to conduct research and collect data for documentary film. In fact, there is a notable absence of information on Step 2 “Research and Collection” in the process of creating a film documentary.

The educator researcher has also been involved in producing a documentary film about Katsu Goto during the last few years (Iwasaki & Miller, 2015) based on a graphic novel (Iwasaki & Berido, 2008, 2010, 2011). Goto was one of the first Hawai‘i sugar plantation laborers from Japan who arrived in Hawai‘i in 1885 who was unfortunately lynched and killed in 1889 because of his labor advocacy and mediation between plantation workers and management. In the process of working on the documentary film, the educator researcher immediately experienced the lack of information on how to begin subject research and data collection for documentary film. The educator researcher found that there is indeed inadequate information, with both academic and popular sources, and educational resources, on how to conduct research and collect data for documentary film. Therefore, the research purpose is in response to the educator researcher’s own experience and aspiration to address this problem and need.

An academic search resulted in a list of significant scholarship about the extensive and diverse world of documentary research and analysis studies; however, there is a lack of the “how to basics” of research and data collection for a documentary film. Regarding popular sources, although there is the “How to Make it in Film” series with episodes consisting of behind the scenes interviews with regional, national and international filmmakers, editors, directors, writers, cinematographers, producers and many others who work in the documentary film industry, it is not a guide to data collection. Covering many aspects of the filmmaking process, each program is designed to take beginning filmmakers through the steps to make it in documentary film.
production. (Kanopy, 2018). Yet, these films/videos do not spend much time explaining the research and collection phase of filmmaking.

As listed in the Steps to a Documentary section, there is an abundance of popular type “How to Make a Documentary” step-by-step guides or “insider tips” such as Michael Moore’s *13 Rules for Making Documentary Films*, yet again, there is no guidance on the research, gathering and collecting of data and subject sources (Desktop Documentaries, 2018; IndieWire, 2014).

However, research and data collection is the fundamental core and foundation for any documentary film (Aufderheide, 2007; Bell, 2011; Frank 2013; Winston, et al., 2017) and is the essence, the heart, of any documentary film project. Simply put, without research and data, there is no documentary film. Thus, there is a need to address this problem and fill this gap.

Professional documentary filmmakers might know how to tackle the central question: where does one begin after deciding upon the subject? However, documentary filmmaker newcomers, novices, or students exploring documentary or educational video and film production may not know where to start. The design and development of a learning resource network for documentary film subject research and data collection would be helpful in addressing this need.

While documentaries have the capacity of reaching a wider public audience than academic historians or researchers, the filmmaker may rarely exercise academic rigor in the documentary film process, unless perhaps creating a public television production or educational programming that requires a professional advisory board (National Endowment for the Humanities). Documentary filmmakers might prefer to tell the story in a way that elicits a greater emotional response, while academia may demand precision and accuracy over narrative storytelling, emotional storytelling (Aufderheide, 2007; Bell, 2011).

Indeed, filmmakers may often avoid consulting a range of experts. Too often for filmmakers’ liking, historians and academics may become enforcers of precise historical sequences, discussion of multiple interpretations, and the need to insert minor characters or precise accuracies, all of which may frustrate the clarity of filmed storytelling for broad audiences (Aufderheide, 2007, p. 92).

However, researchers understand the advantages and benefits of academic application to documentary film projects. Most documentary filmmakers are occupied with filmmaking or fundraising to be able to describe their work and document the process of data collection. Journalists as well do not have the time to conduct extensive historical research in the field; it is an uneasy marriage. Thus, researchers appreciate the potential of academic endeavor for a documentary, including scholarly research, data collection and documentation to add greater validity, depth and accuracy (Aufderheide, 2007; Petrarca & Hughes, 2014; Woo, 2008).

Therefore, to examine the possibilities of research and data collection, this most important phase of the documentary film process, the educator researcher will explore the design and development of a collaborative, diverse, scholarly, open, connected and technology-facilitated, yet autonomous, learning resource network, that spans two countries, Japan and Hawai‘i, for a documentary film about Katsu Goto that will be used as an instructional resource for educational
practice (Siemens, 2005, 2006; Downes, 2010, 2012). This research will be focused and geographically limited to Hawai‘i and Japan; thus the findings may not be generalizable or transferable to a larger population; and if the research were to be replicated and conducted in other geographical areas, results may differ.

However, Yin describes this as statistical generalization and goes so far to suggest researchers dismiss this line of thinking; rather, encouraging researchers to make analytical and transferable generalizations at a “conceptual level higher than that of specific findings or of the specific conditions in the initial study” (2016, p. 107). The researcher agrees with Yin’s reasoning and strongly believes other researchers may be able to replicate the study in their own geographic areas with larger sample sizes and their findings will contribute to the field of documentary film research, learning and humanities education.

The purpose of this learning resource network with Hawai‘i and Japan resources is to help share and tell an educational, meaningful, place-based, locally-relevant story to a wider audience using the powerful, affective and dynamic medium of documentary film.

Conceptual Framework

The educator researcher will explore operationalizing the connectivist learning theory to research and design a diverse, open and connected learning resource network for a documentary film about and in relation to Katsu Goto. Data will be documented, inductively coded and classified (F. Bell, 2011; Canole, Galley, & Culver, 2011); followed by analysis for meaning, interpretation and outcomes (F. Bell, 2011; Siemens & Canole, 2011). George Siemens (2005, 2006) and Stephen Downes (2010, 2012) hypothesized that learning and knowledge resided in a diversity of opinions and that knowledge could be stored and manipulated by technology (Kolowich, 2014). The focus is on the recognition of connections, patterns, opinions, perspectives, differences and similarities, as well as the ability to synthesize ideas and information, with technology often facilitating the connections of the network (Anderson & Dron, 2011; Armatas, Spratt, & Vincent, 2014; Dunaway, 2011). Researchers emphasized that forming connections, via traditional or digital platforms, was the conduit through which learning and collaboration takes place and the four key principles were: autonomy, connectivity, diversity and openness (Duke, Harper & Johnston, 2013; Goldie, 2016; Tschofen & Mackness, 2012).

- Autonomy: refers to the autonomy of participants exercising choice, control and independence.
- Connectivity: refers to the personal, educational and professional networks, learning environments, interactivity, connections, and interactivity between nodes.
- Diversity: refers to the differences among learners, including gender, race, culture, socioeconomic status, aptitudes, etc.; points of view and perspective within a specific field or widest possible spectrum; diverse interactivity offered by various modes of communication, including digital communication.
- Openness: refers to the mechanism which allows the sharing of information, resources, ideas, expertise, perspective and insights through networks.

Tschofen and Mackness (2012) examined these four key principles of connectivism from an individual learner experience within a connected environment and found that learners vary greatly
in their desire for and interpretation of the principles. There is also considerable diversity in how researchers and educators focus on, utilize, apply and interpret the connectivist principles in educational and research practice (Canole et al., 2011; Siemens & Canole, 2011).

Downes further proposed that learning is distributive, not located in any given place, but consisted of a network of connections formed from experience and interactions within a community, most often, but not exclusively, facilitated through technology and the Internet. This theory was to be focused upon the new, and newly empowered learner, who was assumed to be a part of the “net” generation, and one who was thinking and interacting in new ways (2010; 2012). At this time, many researchers believed the massive open online course (MOOC) phenomenon was an appropriate representation that developed from connectivist theory (Anderson & Dron, 2011; Downes, 2017; Kolowich, 2014; krista2366) followed by the popularity and promotion of open educational resources (OER) (Mulder, 2013).

In particular, this study will target and apply three key concepts of connectivism and its relation to building networks:

1) Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources and
2) Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning, and
3) Building and designing the nodes of learning resources (Anderson & Dron, 2011; Downes; 2017; Nussbaum-Beach, 2013; Siemens, 2008; Stephenson, 2005).

The technology-facilitated connectivist learning and information node network for this study will be referred to by the educator researcher as a learning resource network of content: digital, artifacts, and human resources, including academic scholars (See Figure 2 and 3).

The mixed results of MOOCs as an educational practice (Armstrong, 2013; Kartensi, 2013) may have influenced some researchers to focus on the individual learner and student-centered activities of connectivism (Armatas et al., 2014; Loertscher & Koechlin, 2011). Downes’ own focus shifted and evolved. Downes and other researchers named this iteration of connectivism as a “personal learning environment” (PLE). They felt the personal learning environment could connect one to a variety of resources and be as broad and wide as possible; the entire world could be one’s personal learning environment, one in which information is continuously being shared and consumed, and learning is taking place through the facilitation of technology and the Internet. The network can start with a list of friends, colleagues, professional connections and activities, then expand to new connections, thereby creating new interactions that can work in tandem with the existing PLE or independently. (Armatas et al., 2014; Downes, 2017; Loertscher & Koechlin, 2011).

It should be noted that prior to Downes’ version of the PLE, Karen Stephenson, a corporate anthropologist, wrote and spoke about personal knowledge and social network analysis back in 2004. In 2005 in her chapter Trafficking in trust: The art and science of human knowledge networks in the text Enlightened power: How women are transforming the practice of leadership (2005) Stephenson emphasized that the relationships between people in an organization create the real pathways of knowledge and power. The actual power of a person or an organization existed in the structure of a human network, one that is not based upon the formal levels of the organization or outlined in a manual.
This view was also supported by writers who labeled the practice as: personal learning network (PLN) (Eisele-Dyrli, 2011; Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011; Nussbaum-Beach, 2013) and discussed its helpful professional and educational applications at all levels in schools and organizations. Thus, the term connectivism broadened to include the PLE and the PLN, summarizing and defining the PLE and PLN network to be the people, information, expertise, learning objects, and material that are the focus of interest, research and study (Downes, 2017; Nussbaum-Beach, 2013). Growing, nurturing and maintaining a connectivist network can be a complex process and researchers must exercise and apply standard research guidelines. “Educators must master digital tools and select trustworthy sources – individuals, resources, and organizations – in a safe, effective, and ethical way,” emphasized Nussbaum-Beach (2013, p. 26).

Figure 2. Representation of a connectivist PLE (personal learning network) or PLN (personal learning network) with the educator researcher as the center of the network. Retrieved from http://www.mlmcpherson.com
Arts-Based Research for Creation

While operationalizing the connectivist learning theory, the educator researcher will also apply Arts-Based Research (ABR) practice as the methodology to create the collaborative learning resource network. Documentary film takes a highly subjective, artistic approach; the filmmaker directs the entire process, from subject selection and participants, to creative treatment and production (Bell, 2011; Friend & Caruthers, 2016). This, along with the use of film production as a data collection tool; public accessibility, engagement, usability and impact; and the creative, storytelling, interpretive nature of film, guides the study’s ABR approach. (Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Knowles et al., 2008; Leavy, 2015; McNiff, 1998; 2014).

Arts-Based Research (ABR) for creation and representation is a methodology used by researchers across the disciplines when the research, process, purpose or outcome involves creative endeavor. Chapman & Sawchuck (2012; 2015) defined ABR for creation as “Theses or projects typically integrate a creative process, experimental aesthetic component, or an artistic work as an integral part of the study” (p. 6) and “supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation,” (Queen’s University; SSHRC). Barone and Eisner explain ABR as, “The extent that an arts-based research project effectively employs aesthetic dimensions in both its inquiry and representational phases, to that extent the work may provide an important public service that may be otherwise unavailable” (2012).
This representation can be very broad and could be literary writing, music, dance, performance, visual arts, film and other media (Leavy, 2015) or community-based cultural work, community-based research in action, participatory action research and other options (Queen’s University; SSHRC), as well as activism activities (Nossel, 2016). “Where science is committed to the most direct, logical and impersonal presentation of essential facts, the impact of the arts is determined how a script, song, or other source is presented. The expression, rather than descriptions of fact, is the empirical evidence,” (McNiff, 2014, p. 257). Constantly expanding and evolving, new approaches seem unlimited and can include “artivism” (Nossel, 2016), phenomenological studies (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2016) and “autopoiesis; cognitive mapping; constructivism; demo (or die); deviation practice; enactivism; experimentation; heuristic, process-based and systemic approaches; imitation; modeling; remediation; schematization; simulation; tinkering; and trial and error,” (Poissant, 2014, p. 2).

The ABR researcher remains focused on academic inquiry with a particular story or message to tell. The research purpose takes precedence; however, the exploration on which medium will best accomplish that goal is what defines ABR practice. It is no less rigorous and demands as much, if not more, commitment, enthusiasm and engagement including data collection and data generation, analysis and interpretation. Triangulation of data with a holistic approach is often suggested. The purpose of creation distinguishes ABR from traditional representations of quantitative or qualitative research and could address thematic content, promote educational opportunities, and encourage reflection and action. Public accessibility, usability and impact is often an important focus of ABR and can distinguish ABR from other methodologies (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015; McNiff, 2014).

People and cultures around the world have long been practicing and developing arts-based research in all areas of life. However, the term ABR first emerged in academics between the 1970s and 1990s, developing from creative arts, artistic expression and social science, scientific interdisciplinary research collaborations augmented by technological advances (Chilton & Leavy, 2014; McNiff, 1998). In the 1970s and 1980s, Eisner’s arts-based education research and evaluation began gaining attention (1975; 1981), followed by Shawn McNiff’s art-based research (1986) and many others. Eisner posited “scientific procedures are not the only forms through which human understanding is secured and scientific methods are not the only ways through which human influence can be confidently created (1975, p. 1). He coined the term “connoisseurship” to discern the skill, form and imagination of the creator and product and its application to the arts including music, paintings and cinematography.

Later, the publication of the *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research* (Knowles & Cole, 2008), with its wide range of approaches, disciplines, and methodologies, while addressing concerns and challenges, positioned ABR in scholarly research in academics. Many articles and books in the last decade have also addressed ABR, most notably the comprehensive *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice* (2015) by Patricia Leavy, along with *Arts Based Research* by Barone and Eisner (2012). Others include *Doing Digital Humanities: Practice, Training, Research* (Crompton et al., 2016), *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* (Sullivan, 2005) and *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (Barlet & Bolt, 2007).
During this same time period in the 1970s and 1980s, the concept and practice of art as therapy in psychotherapy and behavioral contexts gained mainstream acceptance and practice (McNiff, 1998; Ulman & Dachinger, 1977; Rubin, 1984, 1987). Shawn McNiff, professor and dean of the Institute for the Arts and Human Development at Lesley College in Massachusetts studied the similar and dissimilar qualities of artistic expression in relation to psychotherapy (1986), medicine (1992) and wrote in the preface of Art Heals: How Creativity Cures the Soul “Art heals by accepting the pain and doing something with it” (2004).

While many universities in the United States have recognized and supported ABR practices within their various arts and sciences, social sciences, education and other programs, ABR and all of its iterations, especially research creation, has a large creative base in Canada, with many articles being published by the Canadian Journal of Communication. Promotion and support of post-secondary research and training is sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, a federal research funding agency.

Queen’s University, Concordia University, Université du Québec à Montréal and others have numerous programs dedicated to ABR. The University Center for Media Arts, a research center based in Concordia University and the Université du Québec à Montréal started an extensive examination of research creation methodology with a series of conferences that started in 2014 (Poissant, 2014).

### Research for Creation

With a focus on the research creation category within ABR, Chapman and Sawchuck (2012; 2015) further discuss four subcategories that contribute to the research agenda of the digital humanities and social sciences calling them “family resemblances” as noted by prominent Austrian-British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (p. 15-21; p. 49):

1) **Research-for-creation.** The gathering together of material, ideas, concepts, collaborators, technologies, narratives, and theoretical frames that characterizes initial stages of creative work and occurs iteratively throughout a project. This gathering is “research” in the same way that reading through recent journal articles, tracking down important references, or conducting interviews are key elements of producing various academic contributions to knowledge, conventional, research-creation, or otherwise.

2) **Research-from-creation.** The extrapolation of theoretical, methodological, ethnographic, or other insights from creative processes, which are then looped back into the project that generated them. Research is not only part of developing art projects that then stand on their own; rather, performances, experiences, interactive art works, can also be ways of generating research data that can then be used to understand different dynamics.

3) **Creative presentations of research.** A reference to alternative forms of research dissemination and knowledge mobilization linked to such projects. The presentation of traditional academic research in a creative fashion across a number of disciplines, including sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, and communication and media studies.

4) **Creation-as-research.** Draws from all aforementioned categories, an engagement with the ontological question of what constitutes research in order to make space for creative material and process-focused research-outcomes. The elaboration of projects where
creation is required in order for research to emerge. It is about investigating the relationship between technology, gathering and revealing through creation, while also seeking to extract knowledge from the process.

Arts-Based Research Practice

ABR practice can range from public projects with research on a cultural public space in Paris (Vivant, 2017) to community art education and appreciation (Coutts & Jokela, 2008; Berleant, 2002). Natalie LeBlanc explored the process and practice of photographing multiple closed schools in cities across Canada and interviewed principals, students, board directors and faculty, to produce significance and meaning in a photo exhibit and dissertation *In/Visibility of the Abandoned School: Beyond Representations of School Closure* (2014; 2015).

A global collaborative project born out of research and concern over marine pollution, “Skyscraper (the Bruges Whale),” displayed in the medieval city of Bruges, helped build environmental awareness and action. Over five tons of marine debris collected by Hawai‘i Wildlife Fund volunteers from Hawai‘i Island and Kauai beaches in 17 different cleanup events in 2017 was shipped to Studio KCA in New York City and fabricated into a 38-foot-tall whale sculpture that was installed as part of the Bruges Triennial 2018, a contemporary arts exhibition featuring 15 large art constructions in the historic city center held May – September, 2018 (Hawai‘i Wildlife Fund, 2018; Damon Tucker, 2017; Studio KCA).

Megan Lamson, president of Hawai‘i Wildlife Fund, who has a master’s degree in Tropical Conservation Biology & Environmental Studies from the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo and works for the Aquatic Resources Division of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources said HWF has removed over 248 tons of marine debris since 2003 from Hawai‘i Island alone. In a personal interview (2018, September 19) Lamson said:

It was an honor use our research regarding marine debris and to take part in this inspirational opportunity. We were able to combine research, art and global collaboration to create this Humpback whale installation which is very symbolic. What was ugly trash has been transformed into something powerful. The Pacific Ocean is the home of the Humpback whale and they migrate from Alaska annually to the warm waters of Hawai‘i. Marine debris has no cultural or national boundaries, but affects everyone. We have fo‘ond debris in Hawai‘i from all over the world, including China and Japan from the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Our hope is that this art will bring attention to, inspire change and prevent the accumulation of plastic pollution in the world.

An estimated 9 million visitors will see the whale and the other installations in Belgium with the possibility of exhibitions elsewhere. (see Figure 4)
Figure 4. “Skyscraper (the Bruges Whale)” completed installation in June 2018. Photo by Patsy Iwasaki.

Public accessibility is often a key facet of ABR especially if the end product is “usable” and has the ability to impact a larger audience beyond academia by utilizing “the tenets of the creative arts in social research in order to make that research publicly accessible, evocative, and engaged,” (Chilton & Leavy, 2014). It is this interaction and connection to an audience, that may extend beyond reason and intellect, but speaks to the heart and spirit with different responses and interpretations, that can distinguish ABR from other methodologies (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015; McNiff, 2014). “Artistic expressions and outcomes arouse feelings rather than attempting to be impartial and frequently generate questions rather than answers or certainties. While conveying information, the evidence often moves and inspires audiences,” (McNiff, 2014, p. 257). Thus, researchers often use ABR, with its innovative dissemination practices, to create projects that inspire change and action, such as awareness of social justice, human rights and equity issues (Hanley, et al., 2013).

The subject of the documentary film, early Japanese immigrant Katsu Goto, who emigrated to Hawai‘i as a sugar plantation worker in 1885 and was unfortunately lynched and killed in 1889 because of his labor advocacy and mediation between plantation workers and management, touches upon social justice and human rights issues.

In summary, the research as explored and discussed in this article is designed to create a diverse, open, and connected learning resource network between Hawai‘i and Japan for a documentary film that will be used as a place-based, locally-relevant instructional resource for educational practice in humanities education. It is the hope of the educator researcher that this meaningful story will be told and shared with the world using the increasingly accessible, powerful and effective medium of documentary film.
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