

LESSON 5: MODELING



EZRA WUBE
POSSIBLE WORLD

OVERVIEW

Ezra Wube's short film *Possible World* is a painted animation inspired by interviews with over 100 everyday individuals across Ethiopia. In a series of beautiful and dynamic scenes, Wube brings to life his subjects' dreams for a regenerative world. Students will engage in dialogue and an activity to learn about the practices depicted in the film.

Objectives:

1. Students will consider the perspectives of the 100 everyday individuals across Ethiopia who were interviewed for the film.
2. Students will explore the interviewees' collective dreams for a regenerative world.
3. Students will reflect on existing practices that benefit both communities and the environment.
4. Students will explore the artist's model for a shared future and offer their own insights.

Lesson Plan:

1. Introduction: 5 minutes
2. Screen Film: 5 minutes
3. Group Discussion: 15 minutes
4. Partner Talk: 10 minutes
5. Activity: 20 minutes
6. Conclusion: 5 minutes

Key Terms & Vocabulary: Agriculture, Animation, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Ecology, Energy Efficient, Interconnected, Mutual Aid, Model, Natural Resource, Pollution, Recycle, Regenerative, Sustainable, Wind Energy

Materials:

1. Provided activity sheets (to be printed)
2. Writing tools (pens, (colored) pencils, markers)

1 INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Welcome students.

Today we will explore a film by artist Ezra Wube and take a closer look at daily life in Ethiopia. In this film, the artist includes the perspectives of 100 everyday people that he interviewed about their hopes and dreams for a regenerative world.

Q: What do we mean when we say “regenerative”?

A: Whereas the highest aim of sustainability is to satisfy fundamental human needs today without compromising the possibility of future generations to satisfy theirs, the goal of regenerative design is to create systems that revitalize and improve communities, human and natural resources, and society as a whole.

2 SCREEN FILM (5 MINUTES)

We will now watch *Possible World*, by filmmaker Ezra Wube. Ezra was born in Ethiopia and is currently based in Brooklyn, New York.



ACTION: As we watch the film together, please consider:

1. What changes do you notice as the film progresses?
2. How is the film made?

3 GROUP DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

Take a moment to recall what we just saw in the film.

Q: What is the technique or style of the film?

A: Animation (the technique of photographing successive drawings to create an illusion of movement when the movie is shown as a sequence).

Q: How does the film begin? How would you describe the first depiction of nature?

A: Lush, healthy, robust, thriving, energetic, alive

Q: What changes quickly happen to the blossoming environment depicted in the film?

Let's work to identify some human interventions that are happening in the film's opening scene.

Q: What would you consider to be **harmful** interventions?

A: Pollution, waste, litter, abandonment of nature, exploitation of natural resources

Q: What would you consider to be **helpful** interventions?

A: Cleaning up, sweeping, recycling, working collaboratively

As we mentioned earlier, the filmmaker interviewed 100 people whose hopes and dreams helped to shape this animation.

Q: How are the perspectives of the 100 interviewees infused throughout the film?

A: Quotes, voices and sound, terms, actions, names at the end

Q: What is the power of having multiple voices included as opposed to a few?

Let's take a closer look at some of the terms that were generated by the interviews (**timestamp 1:10**). Take a moment to find a term that you gravitate towards. You might select a term you've never heard of, something you practice, or something you would like to know more about.

Suggestion: Invite several students to share their term. Spend time expanding on the global impact of more challenging terms, i.e. tourism. For an extension, you might ask students to conduct research on a specific topic.

Quick Game!

Q: Amongst these terms, which do we celebrate? *i.e. Balanced Weather*

Q: Amongst these terms, which do we aim to fight against? *i.e. To Ban the Oil Industry*

Q: Amongst these terms, which do we depend on? *i.e. Rain or love*

Q: Amongst these terms, which do we _____ (ask students to try categories)

4 PARTNER TALK (10 MINUTES)

The film depicts an ideal (utopian) world that we have not yet realized.

Answer the following questions with a partner sitting next to you:

Q: How can we model the world that we want to see, as the film does?

Q: What would need to change for that world to be realized?

Q: Recall the two symbols that are depicted in the film (see them reproduced in the addendum). How have the legacy of those symbols continued to inspire a regenerative world for decades?

Invite students to share their answers with the group.

ACTIVITY: FUTURIST ZINE (20 MINUTES)

A thriving community requires basic needs to be met. A regenerative community requires a balance between those needs and the surrounding environment. In Possible World, let's consider what interventions transform the environment from harmful to healthful.

We will replay the film and, as we do so, we will also identify the various forms or signs in the following categories: Housing and Shelter; Transportation; Food and Agriculture; Energy; Community and Care.

Step 1 Prepare the materials. Students will need the attached activity sheet or a blank piece of paper where they can draw the template. Students will also need a writing tool (pencil, pen, marker, etc.).

Step 2 Inform students that they are tasked with identifying all actions, signs, symbols, or depictions in the film that apply to these categories.

Step 3 Replay the film and remind students to document what they identify in the respective boxes.

Step 4 Invite students to briefly share their work with the class.

Suggestion: Work together to identify as many answers as possible while you document on a larger board or poster.

Step 5 Wrap-up discussion

Q: Can you identify any answers that might apply to more than one category?

Q: Can you identify which of these are provided by the government, community, mutual aid, and individuals?

Q: Humans mostly depend on governments for services and systems in order for collective needs to be met. Based on this Possible World, what benefits might communities experience when efforts and responsibilities are shared (i.e. mutual aid, community initiatives)?

A: Autonomy, agency, multiple perspectives, democratization, empowerment, shared resources, shared skills, sustainable ecologies, less environmental impact, regenerative world

6 CONCLUSION (5 MINUTES)

The film ends with the names of the various people whose voices inspired this film. In doing so, Ezra Wube models an inclusive work practice that values all of its participants. Much like the *Possible World*, we are all capable of contributing our skills, talents, and gifts with our communities.

Concluding Questions:

Q: In what ways do you hope to help build a more regenerative world?

Q: What specific skills, talents, or gifts are you able to share with your communities?

Q: What ideas will you take from this lesson into your daily life?

Q: Does anyone have any other questions before we conclude the lesson?

GLOSSARY

Agriculture (noun): The science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool, and other products.

Animation (noun): The technique of photographing successive drawings to create an illusion of movement when the drawings are shown rapidly in a sequence.

Biodiversity (noun): The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.

Climate Change (noun): A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change beginning in the 20th century and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by humans using fossil fuels.

Ecology (noun): The branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings.

Energy Efficient (adjective): Making economical use of energy, especially electricity or fuel.

Interconnected (adjective): Having all constituent parts linked or connected.

Mutual Aid (noun): A system where communities take on the responsibility for caring for one another, rather than having individuals fend for themselves.

Model (noun): A system or thing used as an example to follow or imitate.

Natural Resource (noun): Materials or substances such as minerals, forests, water, and fertile land that occur in nature and can be used for economic gain.

Pollution (noun): The presence in or introduction into the environment of a substance that has harmful or poisonous effects.

Recycle (transient verb): Convert (waste) into reusable material.

Regenerative (transient verb): To regrow or be renewed or restored, with the intention to improve upon what has been damaged or lost.

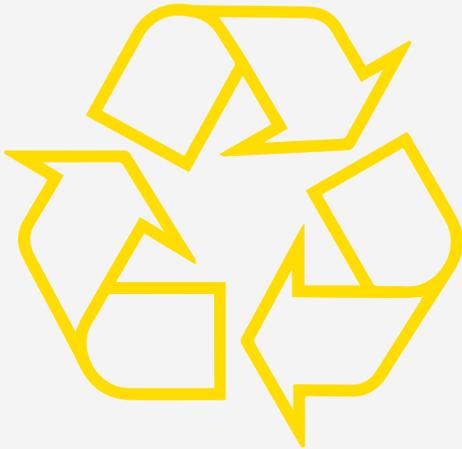
Sustainable (adjective): Conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources.

Wind Energy, or Wind Power (noun): Electricity generated by wind, particularly through the use of wind turbines.

ADDENDUM: SYMBOLS



The modern **peace sign** was designed by Gerald Holtom for the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1958.



The original **recycling symbol** was designed in 1970 by Gary Anderson, a senior at the University of Southern California as a submission to the International Design Conference as part of a nationwide contest for high school and college students sponsored by the Container Corporation of America.

ECOLOGY OF COMMUNITY (ACTIVITY)

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Identify all actions, objects, symbols, or depictions in the film that apply to the 5 categories of needs listed below.
Write your answers in the table below!

CATEGORIES OF NEEDS	EXAMPLES	PROVIDED BY
1. HOUSING AND SHELTER	e.g. building	
2. TRANSPORTATION	e.g. bus, energy efficient car, roads	
3. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE	e.g. garden, farm	
4. ENERGY	e.g. windmills, solar panels	
5. COMMUNITY AND CARE	e.g. music, picnic	