



An Esplanade Commission

The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time

By Drama Box (Singapore)

9 – 11 & 14 – 18 Jul 2025
Esplanade Annexe Studio

Educator's Guide

Recommended Level: Secondary – Tertiary

MESSAGE TO EDUCATORS

Dear Educators,

Welcome to ***The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time***.

This play was created in response to some of the shared concerns raised by youths during our research conversations with them.

What would my future look like?
How would I know if I made the right choices?
What if I regret my decisions?
How can I best prepare for a future that looks increasingly scary?
Why do I constantly feel like I'm out of time?

These are not just questions faced by students.
We adults struggle with them as well.

In the play, we follow the journey of Zul who is trapped in a never-ending race against time as he works towards a secure future. Beneath the story's time loops and surreal moments, a deeper theme surfaces: the quiet bravery it takes to confront the unknown, admit fear, and figure a way forward.

We come to understand that courage isn't about the absence of fear—it's about choosing to act in spite of it. Sometimes, it looks like standing up. Other times, it looks like opening up. Often, it simply looks like staying present in a world that demands so much.

The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time is an invitation to respond to our fears with courage and hope as we reimagine how to live with a future that is uncertain, in a world that is increasingly unfriendly.

We hope this resource guide will support you in helping students reflect on their inner courage—and the many different shapes it can take.

Thank you for (time) travelling together.
May we all (re)discover our unique rays of light along the way.

From,
Han Xuemei (Director), Tan Wei Ting (Playwright) & Lim Ci Xuan (Assistant to Director)

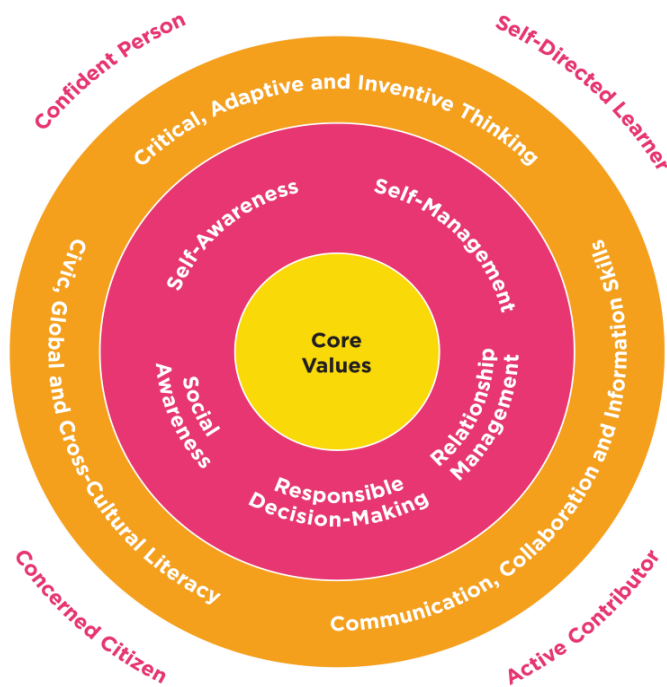
LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND POST-SHOW ENGAGEMENT

The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time is created for students to:

- Develop the ability for introspection and critical reflection
- Build resilience in dealing with challenges and stresses
- Cultivate a healthy sense of self-worth

To support the learning objectives for students, we have created two separate post-show resource guides.

<u>For Students</u>	<u>For Educators</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designed to support students in processing their experience at <i>The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time</i> and to extend conversations relating to how they feel about the future.• Contains activities and relevant resources that invite and help students to understand and analyse the issues explored in the play as well as learn more about theatre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designed to be a guide for educators.• Contains suggested activities and relevant resources to supplement the students' experience at <i>The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time</i>.



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Using the framework of 21st Century Competencies, both the student performance guide and teacher resource guide serve to move one step closer in developing students into **confident persons** who are “adaptable and resilient, know themselves, are discerning in judgment, think independently and critically, and communicate effectively”. We also hope to inspire students to become **self-directed learners** who “take responsibility for their own learning, are curious, reflective, and persevering in the lifelong pursuit of learning, driven by their passion and purpose”.

ABOUT THE THURSDAY AFTERNOON CLUB: THE LIGHT OF TIME (TTAC)

Synopsis

On the eve of the Physics pre-pre-pre-pre-Prelims, a group of students and their teacher are pulling an all-nighter at an ice cream cafe. In this world where schools prepare students for every possible scenario in life, the students often feel as if time is slipping through their fingers, leaving them anxious and overwhelmed.

On this night, something strange happens—they find themselves in inexplicable situations where time does not move in the usual way. As they try to unravel this mystery, each one of them is forced to confront the compromises they’ve made, their true desires and deeper purpose in life.

The first episode of *The Thursday Afternoon Club*, an original series where characters experience various adventures and struggles together, *The Light of Time* was born from a desire to create a safe space where students can process their anxieties and struggles in dealing with studies and friendship while finding their place in life. Inspiration for this performance resulted from a year-long research phase comprising facilitated conversations with youths between the ages of 14 and 18.

UNPACKING & PROCESSING ISSUES

This section suggests a scaffolded process to facilitate the reflection, discussion and unpacking of the issues explored in the play. It comprises various activities and discussion questions intended for:

(a) Understanding students' responses

- What are students feeling about what happened? (Suggested activity: Geneva Emotion Wheel)

(b) Discussing & analysing issues with students

- Uncertainty of the future

1. What are Students Feeling About What Happened?

Objective

Identify and understand significant emotional response/ resonance that students have towards the play.

Questions to Explore

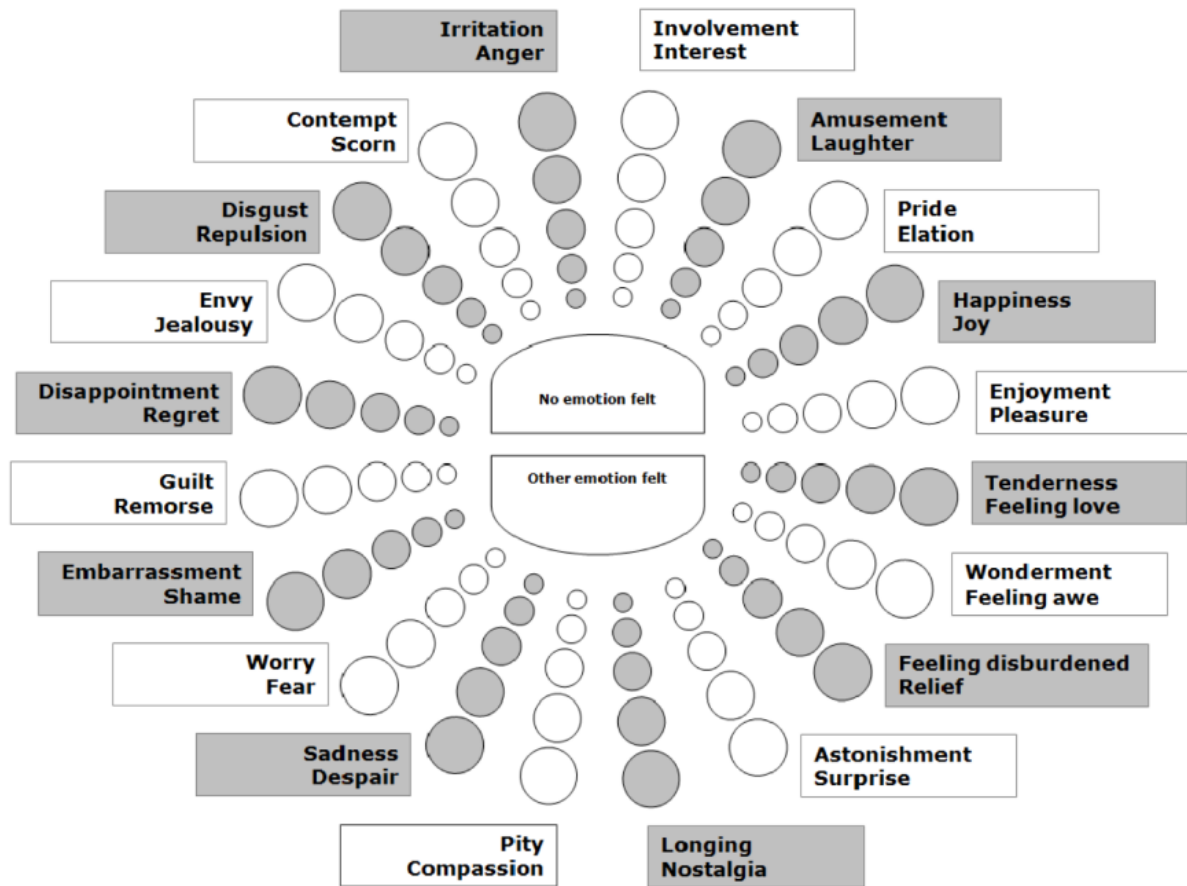
- What were the emotions you felt when you were watching the play?
- Which moment(s) in the play made you feel this way? Why?
- Which moment in the play do the students feel most strongly about? (Suggested Activity: draw an image or write a line that represents that moment)

Suggested Tool: Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW)

(Download [Template & Information](#))

The GEW is a helpful tool that can be adapted and used to support students' responses to the discussion questions.

The responses gathered can help you decide what to focus on in the discussion of issues. For example, if students felt worried during the scene when Zul talked about needing more time to know what career path to take, you might decide to focus the discussion on why they felt that way and unpack issues of uncertainty of the future.



How To Use GEW

- Identify the emotion(s) that is/are relevant
- Indicate each emotion's intensity (smaller circle = lower intensity)
- If you did not feel any emotion, make a cross in at "no emotion felt"
- If you felt an emotion outside of what is listed, write it down at "other emotion felt"

2. Uncertainty of the future

Objective

Analyse and discuss issues so as to develop a deeper understanding of them.

Questions to Explore

a. How does one feel about the future?

In the play:

- How did Zul and the other characters perceive the future?
- How did these perceptions affect them behaviourally, emotionally, and mentally?

Character	Perception of the future	How did these perceptions affect them behaviourally, emotionally, and mentally?
Zul	The future is full of possibilities, but what's the best choice to make?	Zul pushes himself to complete practice papers despite his depleted capacity, causing his anxiety attacks.
Yoyo	The future will be taken over by AI, education cannot prepare you for the future.	Yoyo is constantly on his device, lamenting that school is a waste of time.
Andrea	Why worry about something that is so far away?	Andrea escapes doing practice papers and exams, wishing to spend more time with friends before parting ways.
Mrs Lumens	Mrs Lumens fears that she will be replaced by AI.	Mrs Lumens struggles with low self-esteem, pinning her hope on her student, Zul.

In reality:

- How do we feel about the future?
 - Suggested activity: What Might the Future Look Like?
 - Draw or write down three images you have of the future 10 years later. (teachers are encouraged to have a go yourselves in visualising your future too!)
- How does it affect us, in terms of our thoughts and behaviours?

b. How do people deal with uncertainty of the future?

In the play:

- How did Zul deal with the uncertainty of the future?
- Ways that were adopted by the characters in the play:
 - **Social Support:** The network of people who provide help and support in times of need.
 - **Time Management:** A process of organising and planning how to allocate your time between different tasks and activities.

In reality:

- What if it was me?
- Which strategies do I adopt?
- How have they worked out for me?

The future is never certain.

How do we respond to this uncertainty with courage and hope?

Suggested Activity: Courage Compass

This activity can be done in class with students. Students can work individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Ask students “What gives you courage?”

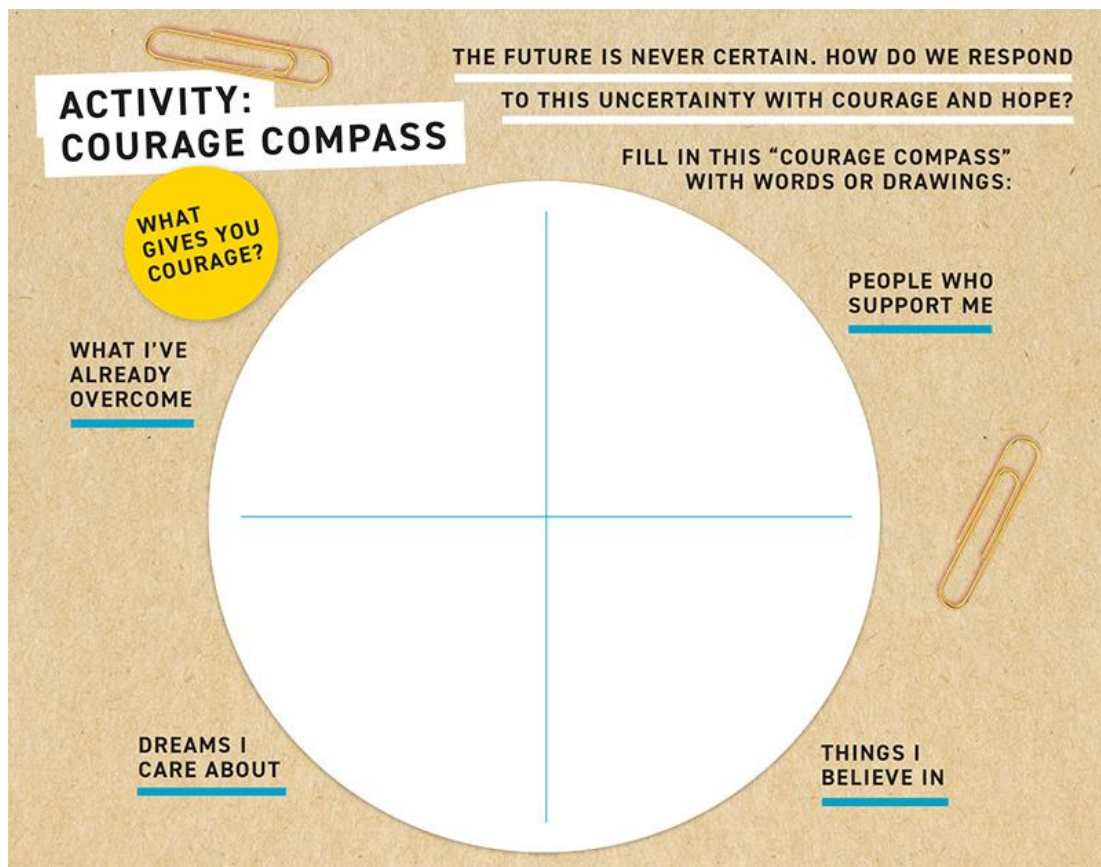
Provide the template below and encourage students to fill in this “Courage Compass” with words or drawings in relation to these four categories:

- People who support me
- Things I believe in
- What I’ve already overcome
- Dreams I care about

After filling in the “Courage Compass”, teachers may use the following prompt to extend the discussion:

- What are some situations in which you might find yourself needing this “Courage Compass”?

Sharing can be done in class according to students’ level of readiness.

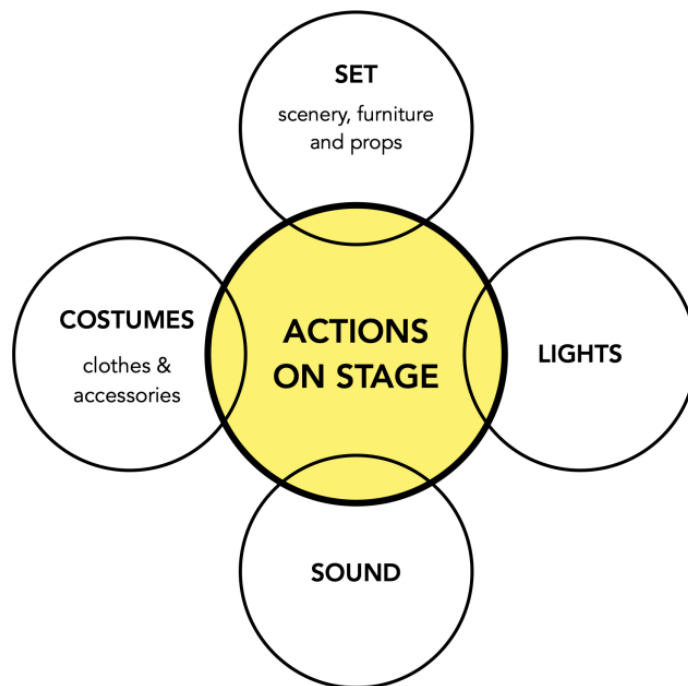


LEARNING ABOUT THEATRE

This section suggests a scaffolded process to facilitate the reflection, discussion and unpacking of the issues explored in the play. It comprises various activities and discussion questions intended for:

- Theatrical Elements
- Motifs and Symbols

a. Theatrical Elements



The basic elements that make a theatre performance can be understood as actions on stage supported by a combination of set, lighting, sound, costume and sometimes video.

These elements help to:

- indicate time and place
- make actions visible
- bring attention to / away from things
- create mood
- create symbolic meaning

What are some of the memorable elements you remember from *The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time*?

b. Symbols and Motifs

Symbol: A thing that represents or stands for something else; especially a material object that represents something abstract.

Motif: Recurring/ repeated symbol(s)

Theme: A central topic, subject or question explored through the story.

The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time is a play about courage—the courage to accept and respond to uncertainties.

The motifs help to express the themes of the story.

What symbols and/or motifs did you see in ***The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time***?

Symbol / Motif	Where can I find it in the play?	Representation(s)
Primary school science experiment	<p>Zul time travels back to primary school, Andrea asks him to show her the cool science experiment. Zul rejects her, rushing to prepare for DSLE each time.</p> <p>Zul finally decides to complete the experiment after being stuck in the time loop.</p>	<p>Paying attention to the journey and process, letting go of results.</p> <p>*Suggested questions for discussion by drawing reference to this symbol:</p> <p>-What should learning and education be about?</p> <p>-How can we hold on to the joy and curiosity of the learning and discovery process?</p>
Ice Cream	<p>Andrea tells Mrs Lumens: “But we are in an ice cream cafe, it’s going to melt”!</p> <p>In Zul’s dream, Andrea offers him ice cream, but he rejects her.</p> <p>The ice cream cafe is a space for gathering and conversations.</p>	<p>Bring present, appreciating small joys even when the future is uncertain. For Zul, the ice cream reminds him that time is passing.</p> <p>A means of care and connection between the characters.</p>

Light	<p>Title of the play: “The Light of Time”</p> <p>When Zul goes into a panic attack, stage lights switch off one by one.</p> <p>When he thinks of his happy place, there is a sudden glow of light and time travels.</p> <p>During the Primary school Science experiment, Zul and Andrea point the laser lights at each other, watching the lights change shape as they play with their voices.</p>	<p>This work relates to the real life experiences of youths, creating a space of reflection for the audience.</p> <p>“Lightness” is an attempt to defy gravity, a resistance against things that weigh us down, a desire for lightness amongst challenging times.</p> <p>As an illuminating source, light represents hope and courage that we hold on to in the darkest of times, as change and transformation takes place.</p> <p>Light represents fleeting moments of growth and happiness.</p> <p>*Suggested questions for discussion by drawing reference to this symbol:</p> <p>- What are the sources of light that keep us going?</p> <p>-Are we the “light” for the people around us?</p>
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CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Sound Designer	: Lynette Quek
Costume Designer	: Max Tan

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Technical Manager	: Huang Xiangbin
Stage Manager	: Gillian Ong
Stage Manager (Workshop)	: Geralyn Toh
Assistant Stage Manager	: Voon Yueqi
Crew	: Chong Wee Nee

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Founded in 1990, Drama Box is a socially-engaged theatre company known for creating works that inspire dialogue, reflection and change. By shining a spotlight on marginalised narratives and making space for the communal contemplation of complex issues, it seeks to tell stories that provoke a deeper understanding of Singapore's culture, history and identity. Drama Box regularly creates programmes for youths, stemming from the belief that the arts can seed habits of critical thinking during this formative age, and provides a safe space for delving into complex issues such as mental wellness and bullying.

www.dramabox.org | www.youtube.com/dramabox | www.instagram.com/drama_box



FEEDBACK ON EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

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