

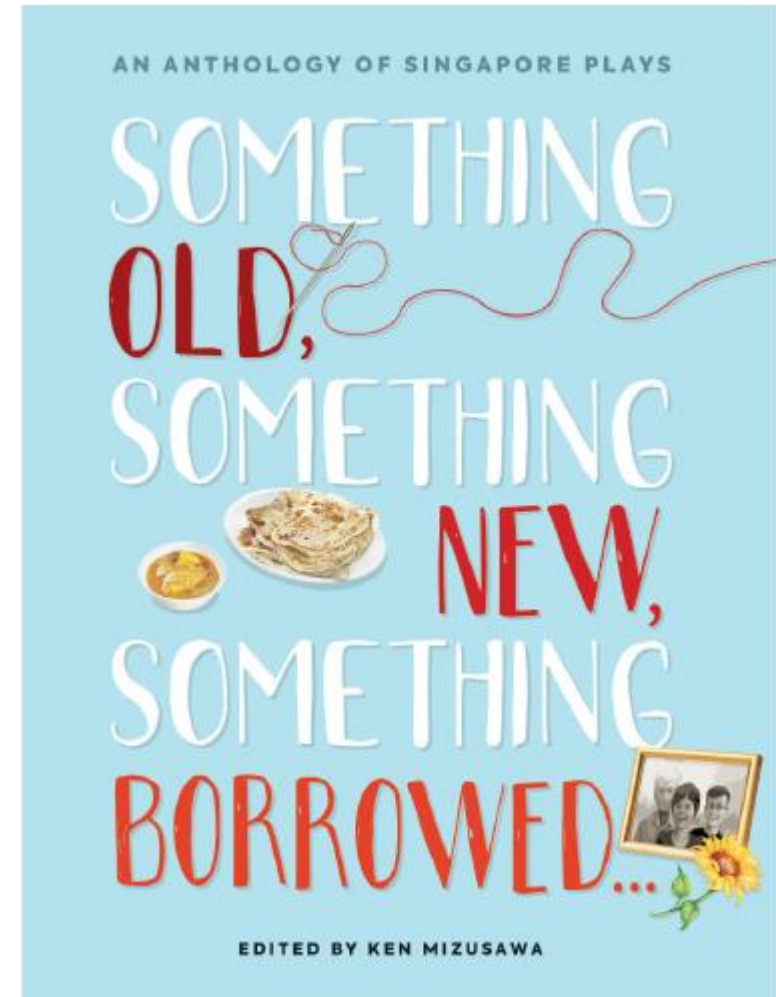
## Unit 2: Applying Ensemble Drama Pedagogy

**Objective:** To develop strategies for the co-construction of meaning in the study of drama



# Why Ensemble Theatre Pedagogy?

- To appreciate the double life of plays on the page and on the stage
- To experience drama by staging theatre collaboratively
- To understand drama from the standpoint of character



Mizusawa, K. (Ed.) (2018). *Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed: An Anthology of Singapore Plays*. Star Publishing

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# What is Ensemble Theatre Pedagogy?

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- Drama work that emphasises dialogue and community
- Inspired by the democratic principles of Athenian theatre and the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century multimodal realities that must be a part of formal education
- A means of examining the literary alongside the theatrical
- Does not simply utilise drama as a learning medium

The background image shows a group of students in white shirts sitting around a table, engaged in reading. One student in the foreground is holding a yellow highlighter over an open book. Another student's arm with a watch is visible on the right. Several open books with text and illustrations are spread across the table.

# Table Readings

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- Reading a dramatic text aloud at a table
- Taking turns reading in role
- A critical brainstorming process

# Table Reading as Ensemble Theatre



MAKES DRAMATIC SENSE OF TEXTS



ALLOWS FOR MULTIPLE  
INTERPRETATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES



DEVELOPS A MORE ROBUST  
UNDERSTANDINGS OF TEXTS



## Critical Framing

- Staging theatre in a literary context
- Presenting textual evidence dramatically
- Performing theatre bound meaningfully by the constraints and priorities of the classroom

# Critical Framing in Ensemble Theatre



Avoids arbitrary guidelines for staging theatre



Allows for disciplinary oversight



Imposes meaningful constraints

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# Examples of Critical Framing

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- Create a tableau depicting a character is portrayed as a victim or villain
- Stage a short performance in which a minor character is the protagonist
- Form impressions of a character through hot-seating



A black and white photograph of a room with several people and plastic chairs. One person is standing on a chair, another is sitting on a chair, and a third is on the floor. The scene appears to be a rehearsal or a performance. An orange horizontal bar is in the top left corner.

# Collective Action

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- Structuring for group roles
- Prioritising mass participation
- Collaborative negotiation of character

# Collective Action in Ensemble Theatre

01

Allows for  
competing  
perspectives on a  
single character

02

Deconstructs the  
complexity of  
character via an  
ensemble

03

Builds community  
through  
collaboration

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# Examples of Collective Action

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- Choral performance of monologues
- Staging the inner conflict of characters using voices in the head
- Give voice to society via a chorus



## Critical Inquiry through Drama

“We'll be able to think independently like the characters ... [because] we are the characters. We'll be able to act out and we'll be able to get a deeper understanding on how these characters feel about certain problems, how they feel about other characters.”

- Secondary 2 student (2019)





## Developing Empathy through Drama

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“[Drama] really makes us feel how [characters] really feel because we're already in their shoes. Maybe given the problems they face, we're also facing, so we can also relate.”

- Secondary 1 student (2019)