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Learn English, the knight's way

Two Inspiring Teacher of English Award winners share classroom tips on engaging young learners

KOH HUI THENG

KNIGHTS and armies rule in Mr Matthew Ong's class. That's why Anglo-Chinese School pupils relish his lessons.

Primary Five pupil Linson Lim, 11, told *my paper*: "His English class is very fun."

Mr Ong, 28, was one of nine winners who walked away with the Inspiring Teacher of English Award at yesterday's ceremony to honour educators who have motivated their charges to love the language.

Organised by The Straits Times and the Speak Good English Movement, this is the first national award for English teachers in Singapore schools.

All nine teachers had ventured off the traditional route to engage their young audiences.

Mr Ong devised Quest for the Lost Scrolls – a game strategy where Linson and his classmates gain certificates of ownership for soldiers and weapons.

Pupils were divided into different "kingdoms". Each time a member did well in class projects or behaved well, he added to his kingdom's tally. The group with the highest score was declared the winner.

Asked how he came up with the idea, Mr Ong said: "My students love stories about knights and battles, so I thought of this classroom plan."

Madam Lim Boon Siang, 39, also has a game plan for her classes. She said: "It helps if teachers are humorous and have unpredictable teaching methods, as these arouse students' interest."

So the Broadrick Secondary School English-language and literature teacher hands out rewards of candy and uses online articles and songs to aid her.



INSPIRED DUO: Mr Matthew Ong of ACS and Madam Lim Boon Siang of Broadrick Secondary School. (PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN)

Former Broadrick top student and undergraduate Serene Koh, 23, said: "She's the reason I did well because she made learning English fun."

kohht@sph.com.sg

HELPDESK 我的字典

Inspiring: 鼓舞人心
gǔ wǔ rén xīn

Educators: 教育家
jiào yù jiā