

<b>Headline</b>	Thanks for spicing up English lesson		
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<b>Description</b>	10 teachers receive this year's Inspiring Teacher of English Award.		

This year's 10 winners of the Inspiring Teacher of English Award are:  
 (front row, from left)  
 Ms Toh Ji Rong, 25, from Greenridge Secondary;  
 Ms Foo Soo Ling, 41, from Nanyang Girls' High;  
 Mrs Yvonne Cheen-Tay Su Lin, 39, from Hong Kah Secondary;  
 (middle row, from left)  
 Mr Arthur Kok, 34, from Nan Hua High; Ms Chan May Ling, 33, from Clementi Primary; Mr Alan Anand Johnson, 33, from St Joseph's Institution; Madam K.S. Jaswinder Khosa, 44, from Huamin Primary;  
 (back row, from left) Mr Ong Chin Meng, 31, from Anderson Junior College (AJC); Mr Kelvin Yew, 32, from Millennia Institute; Mr Adrian Bell from AJC.

ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM



# Thanks for spicing up English lessons

Inspiring Teacher of English Award goes to 10 who excel in making classes interesting

By EISEN TEO

SECONDARY school teacher Arthur Kok noticed how his students often mispronounced or misused English words and phrases.

They would enunciate the silent "b" in "subtle", or pronounce "Wednesday" as "wed-nes-day".

"Stressed up" became the norm instead of "stressed out" and "pass up" as opposed to "hand in".

The 34-year-old head of department for English language and literature at Nan Hua High School decided to tackle the problem of poor English in a fun and refreshing way.

Since January last year, his students have been performing, mostly on a weekly basis, a short sketch in front of the whole school using commonly mangled words or phrases.

The audience is then asked to guess what the correct words or phrases should be, to win prizes like lollipops.

For this innovation - dubbed Nan Hua Speaks - and other bright ideas, Mr Kok was named one of 10 recipients of this year's Inspiring Teacher of English Award, given out by The Straits Times and the Speak Good English Movement, with support from the Ministry of Education (MOE).

The 10 were among 124 candidates

nominated by colleagues, students and parents. Two of the winners are from primary schools, five from secondary schools, two from Anderson Junior College, and one from Millennia Institute.

The award, in its second year, honours those who excel in making the teaching of English interesting and relevant to their students and are themselves role models in the use of English.

Candidates had to go through a rigorous six-month selection process that involved classroom observations and interviews with judges drawn from the organisers as well as representatives from the British Council and English language master teachers from MOE.

Each winner received a certificate, a trophy and \$2,000 from Senior Minister of State for Education S. Iswaran at a ceremony held at the National Library last night.

Mr Iswaran urged the winners to continue sharing their enthusiasm and passion for English.

But beyond schools, raising the level of English proficiency in Singapore also requires a societal effort from parents, the community, businesses and the media, he added.

To this end, the Speak Good English Movement hopes the 10 winners can help generate fresh approaches in promoting good English to youth, said its chairman Goh Eck Kheng.

An approach adopted by one of the winners, Clementi Primary School's Chan May Ling, for her Primary 6 class is a simple but effective one: Inject fun into an otherwise boring lesson.

Her students dread the comprehension component of the English exam, but she piques their interest by showing them pictures and background trivia about the topics in the comprehension passages.

Ms Chan, 33, also advises them to pore over the questions before reading the passage, much like looking for pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. "That way, they will look forward to reading the text," she said.

Mr Kok added: "We want every student to see English as a friend. Not alien and foreign, but accessible, fun and engaging."

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