



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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8 TEACHERS AWARDED THE INSPIRING TEACHER OF ENGLISH AWARD 2011

1. Eight English teachers from the Primary and Secondary levels, were awarded the Inspiring Teacher of English Award this year. The winners received a trophy, certificate and cash award from the Guest-of-Honour, Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister of State for Defence and Education at the award ceremony today. A complete list of winners can be found in the Annexes.
2. The Inspiring Teacher of English Award, now in its fourth year, is jointly presented by The Straits Times and the Speak Good English Movement, and supported by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Award honours exceptional teachers of English Language, English Literature and General Paper.
3. Since the Award started in 2008, a total of 29 teachers from the Primary, Secondary and Junior College levels have been recognised for their passion in making English interesting and their unique ability to kindle in each student a love for the language. This year, 88 teachers were nominated by their students, parents, or their peers, and endorsed by their principals. All nominated teachers will receive certificates of commendation.
4. Speaking on the far-reaching impact that English teachers have on their students and applauding developments in English Language instruction, Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister of State for Education, said, "Our teachers play a vital role, as standard-bearers of the language for our children. I have visited several schools over the past few months, and am glad to see much improvement in our efforts to bring the English language to life. In the past, we emphasised writing. I still remember English lessons when I was in school – the teacher

would write an essay topic on the blackboard, and we would spend the most of the class time writing the essay. There was little class interaction or active use of the language. Today the teaching environment is completely different. Our teachers use different techniques, tools and platforms – performing arts, oral presentations, debating sessions etc – to make English interesting and relevant. Classrooms are no longer filled with students quietly writing essays, but are alive with discussions and meaningful interactions, both between teacher and students, and also amongst the students themselves as they engage in peer-to-peer learning.”

5. On the awardees, Mr Goh Eck Kheng, Chairman of the Speak Good English Movement, said, “With the implementation of the whole-school approach to English language, teachers have a key role in setting the standard of spoken English used in and outside the classroom. The winning teachers will not only inspire their students to speak English well, but also, likewise, be role models for their colleagues and other staff of their schools.”

6. Ms **Anna Mathew**, one of the winning English teachers, has an underlying belief that “We don’t teach math, we don’t teach science, we teach students”. Realising how her students at Si Ling Secondary School were not motivated to study, she introduced debate sessions, incorporated newspaper articles into her lessons and allowed her students to discuss topics that were of interest to them. The comfortable learning environment she created resulted in her students warming up to her and willingly participating in class. Anna also brings her favourite books to class, shares with her students the story but leaves the ending hanging so as to pique their interest and encourage them to read – a method inspired by her own Secondary School teacher. This has resulted in even the unlikeliest student approaching her to borrow the book or asking to visit the library together after school.

7. Even after 31 years of teaching, Mrs **Lee Poh Lin** still feels as passionately about teaching as when she started as a trainee teacher. Currently teaching at Montfort Secondary

School, Poh Lin sets high expectations for all her boys and puts in the extra effort to help those who are weaker raise their competency levels by conducting remedial classes on Saturdays and providing individual coaching. She also constantly looks for ways to create interest and love for English in her boys, a task she finds challenging but essential in order for her students to be attentive and willing to learn. Poh Lin strongly believes in imparting important social values to her students and does so by organising volunteer trips to the hospice regularly. This has made such an impact on her students that some of her former students have returned and requested to continue joining her for these trips.

8. For Ms **Suzaina Koh Nasir** who teaches at Assumption Pathway School, helping her students to learn the basics of English is her priority. She uses a variety of simple activities with lessons that are easy to grasp so that her students will not be easily discouraged. These activities include giving her students daily proverbs and reminders to jot down in their journals, exchanging morning greetings every day, and using YouTube and music to teach English – all of which help to stimulate learning, increase their vocabulary and encourage writing. To help her deliver the most useful and appropriate lessons each day, Suzaina uses Mood Cards at the start of the lesson to get a better sense of how her students are feeling that day as well as Learning Cards which indicate how much they have learnt at the end of the lesson.

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About the Inspiring Teacher of English Award

The Inspiring Teacher of English Award acknowledges teachers who have been instrumental in igniting a love for the English language and are effective in helping their students speak and write better. These teachers are passionate about making English interesting and relevant to their students, and are innovative in engaging their students to help them learn English better. The Award salutes these teachers for their continual learning and constant efforts to upgrade themselves to benefit their students and schools. For more information, please visit <http://inspiringenglishteacher.sg/>.

Annex A

Winners of the Inspiring Teacher of English Award 2011

| PRIMARY | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| NAME | SCHOOL |
| Pamela Kiew Hui Li | Bukit View Primary School |
| Edwin Tan Boon Hock | First Toa Payoh Primary School |
| Julian Victor | Rivervale Primary School |
| x Gladys Ng Wai Heng | River Valley Primary School |
| SECONDARY | |
| NAME | SCHOOL |
| Suzaina Koh Bte Nasir | Assumption Pathway School |
| Lee Poh Lin | Montfort Secondary School |
| Anna Mathew | Si Ling Secondary School |
| Shirley Teo-Pang Kim Hiang | Teck Whye Secondary School |

WINNERS OF THE INSPIRING TEACHER OF ENGLISH AWARD 2011 – PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Ms Pamela Kiew (Bukit View Primary School)

Ms Pamela Kiew believes in making English interesting and relevant to her students. She brings the English language to life in her school through a variety of methods – one of which is a “Performing Arts Studio”, a room filled with props to spur teachers and students into scripting plays and putting on drama performances. Another of her programmes, “Mad about English”, gets students to complete tasks related to the four English Language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Recognising that students look to adults as role models, she initiated a programme for all non-teaching staff, including canteen vendors and security guards, to be trained to speak in Standard English.

2. Mr Edwin Tan (First Toa Payoh Primary School)

Mr Edwin Tan created an environment that promotes Standard English not only in the classroom, but in the whole school. Coming from a dialect-speaking family, he attributes his English language skills to his own school environment – including his interactions with teachers, students and friends. He believes that teachers need to understand that they are role models to their students, and should always speak in good English. To achieve this, he devised a programme to improve the level of spoken English in both teaching and non-teaching staff. With his students, he started a reading recovery programme and engaged language facilitators to improve their pronunciation. In order to be a better role model himself, he made personal efforts to improve his own language skills by attending English language courses with British Council.

3. Ms Gladys Ng (River Valley Primary School)

Ms Gladys Ng of River Valley Primary School takes a keen interest in making a difference in the lives of her students. To improve her students’ command of the English Language, she established a classroom environment where the stronger students help weaker ones during lessons. Her key belief is that to motivate her students, one should focus on engaging students in the classroom, rather than to focus solely on achieving perfect grades. She incorporates interactive games like “Taboo” into her lessons to encourage her students to appreciate the English language. With the “Newsmaker” programme, her students discuss news articles – developing their speech and thinking skills with oral presentations in class. To reinforce the enjoyment of reading and learning English, she introduced an innovative programme called “JEWEL”, where storybooks are used to teach grammar to students instead of textbooks.

4. Mr Julian Victor (Rivervale Primary School)

Mr Julian Victor of Rivervale Primary School is constantly inspired to extend the learning process of his pupils beyond the textbook. He strongly believes in group learning and often gets his students to discuss questions in teams, before sharing their answers with the rest of the class. Not only do his students become more immersed in his lessons, they even extended this mode of co-operative learning beyond his classes, tutoring each other and learning from their mistakes. His success stems from his view that the character development of his students comes before their grades. By reducing emphasis on "right" or "wrong" answers, and through group discussions and tutoring, his students are more willing to face challenges, and have become more confident in using Standard English to express themselves.

**WINNERS OF THE INSPIRING TEACHER OF ENGLISH AWARD 2011 –
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

1. Ms Suzaina Koh Nasir (Assumption Pathway School)

Ms Suzaina Koh Nasir of Assumption Pathway School makes it her priority to help her students learn the basics of English. She uses a variety of simple activities with lessons that are easy to grasp so that her students will not be easily discouraged. These activities include giving her students daily proverbs and reminders to jot down in their journals, exchanging morning greetings every day, and using YouTube and music to teach English – all of which help to stimulate learning, increase their vocabulary and encourage writing. Suzaina uses Mood Cards at the start of the lesson to get a better sense of how her students are feeling that day, so that she can better engage them. She also uses Learning Cards which indicate how much they have learnt at the end of the lesson.

2. Mrs Lee Poh Lin (Montfort Secondary School)

Mrs Lee Poh Lin of Montfort Secondary School still feels as passionately about teaching as she did starting as a trainee teacher. She sets high expectations for all her boys and puts in extra effort to help those who are weaker raise their competency levels by conducting remedial classes on Saturdays and providing individual coaching. She also makes use of learning software such as the “Newsmaker” to teach her students. She constantly looks for ways to create interest and a love for English in her students, a task she finds challenging but essential in order for her students to be attentive and willing to learn. Poh Lin strongly believes in imparting important social values to her students and does so by organising volunteer trips to a hospice regularly. This has made such an impact on her students that some of her former students have returned and requested to continue joining her in volunteering at the hospice.

3. Ms Shirley Teo (Teck Whye Secondary School)

Ms Shirley Teo of Teck Whye Secondary School often feels that her students are the ones who taught her how to teach. She believes that a student's learning process is affected by the mood of the teacher, and always makes an effort to come into class with a smile and lots of humour. In line with this principle, she felt that reading should be perceived by students as fun, rather than a chore, and implemented the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) programme, which led her and her team of teachers to being voted for the MOE Outstanding Contributions Award in 2008.

4. Ms Anna Mathew (Si Ling Secondary School)

Ms Anna Mathew of Si Ling Secondary School believes that - "We don't teach math, we don't teach science, we teach students". Realising her students were not motivated to study, she introduced debate sessions, incorporated newspaper articles into her lessons and allowed her students to discuss topics they were interested in. Anna brings her favourite books to class, shares with her students the stories but leaves the endings hanging so as to pique their interest and encourage them to read – a method inspired by her own Secondary School teacher. This has resulted in even the unlikeliest student approaching her to borrow the books she shares with them, or asking to visit the library together after school.