

<b>Headline</b>	Not quite gaga, but Lady Gigi wows pupils all the same		
<b>Date</b>	20 Oct 2010		
<b>Media Title</b>	My Paper	<b>Section</b>	Home
<b>Description</b>	This article features one of this year's recipients of the Inspiring Teacher of English Award – Mrs Esther Chia (CHIJ Kellock), who adopted the persona 'Lady Gigi', the fictitious sister of Lady Gaga, to get students to learn English in a fun way.		

# Not quite gaga, but Lady Gigi wows pupils all the same

By GWENDOLYN NG

SHE may not have the slick dance routines and songs of famous American pop singer Lady Gaga, but English-language teacher Esther Chia sure knows how to wow her pupils.

During her classes at CHIJ Kellock primary school, pupils are treated to the attention-grabbing antics of their pop idol's "sister", Lady Gigi, a fictitious character played by none other than Mrs Chia.

When asked why she plays dress-up, she said: "When you capture their (her pupils') attention, half the battle is won."

Mrs Chia's alter ego helped her clinch this year's Inspiring Teacher for English Award, presented by The Straits Times and the Speak Good English Movement.

A total of 10 teachers received the annual award at a ceremony held in the National

Library Building yesterday.

Mr S. Iswaran, the Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Education, was the guest of honour at the event.

He said: "Outstanding English teachers don't just impart proficiency in the language to their students – they also imbue them with a natural and life-long affection for the language and a commitment to its proper, if not elegant, use."

He added that the Ministry of Education and the National Library Board have started working with 15 pilot schools on the Whole-School Reading Programme to foster a reading culture.

The national teaching award, launched in 2008, recognises teachers who instil a love for English in their students through innovative methods.

In Mrs Chia's case, it involves the donning of shades and a sunhat, transforming her

into Lady Gigi. She even adopts an affected American accent.

Lady Gigi made her debut in March, when Mrs Chia wanted to teach her pupils about reported speech.

She said: "Lady Gaga is one of the most iconic figures in the pop industry at the moment... She's someone the pupils can identify with. I did it to create a figure that they can relate to."

Her first lesson as Lady Gigi comprised a mock press conference where her pupils had to use certain words or a chosen subject when asking their interview questions.

Lady Gigi has since made two further appearances to teach her pupils about idioms and conjunctions.

Pupil Indhu Jayabaskaran said Mrs Chia's passion for English has been inspirational.

"I didn't really enjoy English classes before as the lessons were boring but, now, it's my fa-



**PLAY TIME:** Mrs Esther Chia dresses up as "Lady Gigi" to teach English at CHIJ Kellock primary school. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

avourite subject," she said. "Her lessons are really interesting as she teaches through play."

Mrs Chia can well empathise with her pupil's feelings, coming as she does from a time when English lessons meant

constant drilling.

"I try to look out for more engaging and interesting teaching strategies, because that is how I would want to learn English as well," she said.

[nggwen@sph.com.sg](mailto:nggwen@sph.com.sg)