



PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA



# ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY

MAHEJABEEN HOSSAIN NIDHI

The latest instalment of Imagine – Write Creatively, a joint initiative by United International University (UIU) and The Daily Star (TDS), was held at South Breeze School, Uttara, on February 25, 2016. This event proved that with each new workshop, the initiative is becoming more successful at engaging the students in aspects of writing.

The workshop was conducted by Sharmin Sultana, Assistant Professor and Coordinator, English Language Institute, UIU, with the aid of Rubaia Mahfuz, Trainer, TDS. Students from 6th to 9th grades from the school took part in the programme.

The programme started with a light ice-breaking game which motivated the participating students to pay closer attention. Then, Sharmin, before getting to the core of the workshop, talked with the students, trying to find out their favourite characters from movies or novels as well as what they thought the most important elements of creative writing are.

Rhidita, a 9th grader at the school, said, "At first I thought we were going to be given a topic and write an essay or something but I didn't imagine it would be so much fun and interactive. It was great."

The first activity of the day started with the intent of deciphering the key aspects that make or break writers during characterisation. The students were shown various images of people and asked what they thought of the figures. From the images, the students were able to make connections on how they thought the characters



might be.

After the activity, Sharmin discussed how the images played a role in their characterisation. She explained that alongside the appearance of a person, their actions, expressions, age and background all play crucial roles.

Soon after, the second activity commenced where the students were asked to read a short passage, which they did diligently. Sharmin then asked the students on how certain features of the characters were depicted and the students gave great correspondence. Almost all the students were very responsive which went to show how well the students understood the delineation of the characters.

Then, the students were prompted by a more fun exercise where some of them played the game "Who am I?" The other students in the audience had to give clues to help the students guess which character's name they carried.

The next exercise helped the students have a written practice of what they learned about characterisation as they had to write about a character of their choice from the numerous images in issues of SHOUT. The students displayed ingenuity in their own descriptions and even went as far as to invent names for their chosen characters.

The focus of the workshop then turned to the setting of a story. Sharmin showed

the students a series of scenes. The students were then asked what kind of stories might occur in the places they saw. This emphasised the significance of having an environment where their characters can thrive.

The talk on setting was then followed by an activity where some of the students volunteered to come forward and be blindfolded. Then, they were made to hear, taste or smell and then imagine a setting that reminded them of what they experienced. Once characterisation and setting were discussed in much detail, the progress of plot was the next focal point of the workshop. Sharmin explained how plotlines generally move from exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and finally resolution.

In the final activity of the day, the students, with all the lessons in mind, were shown a few photographs and had to make up stories from it. The students' impromptu skills were quite impressive which displayed how well they absorbed all the lessons taught throughout the event.

Sanjida Rahman, an English teacher at the school, commented, "It was good to see the students being so responsive and taking part in everything. I'm sure the next time they are asked to write something, they'll take help from what they have learnt today."

*With a keen eye and a broken brain to mouth filter, Mahejabeen Hossain Nidhi has a habit of throwing obscure insults from classic novels at random people who may or may not have done anything to warrant them. Drop her a line at mahejabeen.nidhi@gmail.com*

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SUMMER 2016

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