



PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA



ENHANCING THE POWER TO CREATE

SHREYOSI ENDOW

The latest workshop of Imagine Write Creatively was held on April 2, 2016 at the premises of European Standard School (ESS) in Dhanmondi. Imagine - Write Creatively is a joint initiative by The Daily Star (TDS) and United International University (UIU) and aims to encourage students to use their imagination and hone their creative writing skills through a number of intriguing activities.

The workshop was conducted by Sharmin Sultana, Assistant Professor and Co-ordinator, English Language Institute (ELI), UIU and Supriti Sarker, Executive at TDS, and together, they commenced the workshop with a little warm-up exercise to get the students engaged.

Sharmin Sultana then went ahead to say that the focus of the workshop was going to be fiction writing and their intention was not to teach the students how to write but rather to introduce them to the key elements of a story which make it great. In order to motivate the students into participating more, she asked them to name their favourite characters from fictions they have read and why they thought so, to which they replied promptly.

The first activity of the workshop involved explaining the vital points that the students should keep in mind when building their characters, like describing the character's background, behaviour, thinking process, etc. They were shown a number of images of different people portraying a variety of emotions and asked for their opinions on what they thought of the characters. They were then given a writing task in which they had to come up with their own characters, taking help from an issue of SHOUT magazine and then present it to the rest of the participants.

In the next activity, Supriti Sarker told the students about the importance of a setting in their stories. A slideshow consisting of a range of different scenarios was displayed and the students were instructed to describe these using the five senses. The conductors then invited the students to a game where they were asked to touch, taste or smell a particular item while blindfolded and describe a setting that was inspired by it.

Soon, the spotlight shifted to one of the most vital elements of any story - the plot. With a simple diagram



and examples with which the students could relate to instantly, Supriti explained the techniques of telling a good story and showed them how they should progress with their plots.

Throughout the whole workshop, the students responded to each activity with great enthusiasm. There was no lack in their participation or focus, which indicated how the success of these workshops was rising exponentially with each new one.

Once the conductors had wrapped up the programme, Maliha Muhtadi, an eighth grader expressed her opinion on the workshop, "I thought the workshop was very interesting. What I enjoyed the most was how the conductors let us share our ideas with the whole classroom and how their friendly nature allowed us to communicate so well."

Maliha Ahmed, also an eighth grader who claimed to be a writer herself, told SHOUT about how the scenario in this workshop was different from that in their classrooms. She said, "Most of the time during our English language classes, the students aren't much responsive. We are given a task on the board and all we need to do is write it in our copies. However, here we all communicated and everyone participated with so much zeal. I think this workshop has enhanced our interest in writing. Most importantly, I feel that the techniques that we learned here are especially going to help those who are intimidated by the task of writing stories and find themselves in a tough spot when they are asked to do so."

Fifteen year old Fayaz Karim was pleased with the pace of the workshop and how it had him engaged the whole time. "I thought it was going to be rather long and boring, but I ended up having a lot of fun. The skills they taught us will help us improve our writing skills and I'm glad I was a part of this."

Reflecting on the day's success, Sharmin Sultana commented, "What we aim to do through these workshops is to boost the students' imagination because using their imagination, they can reach any goal they set for themselves. We always find that the students like to participate in these workshops, and the students of ESS were no different. They were very co-operative and they seemed to enjoy the programme a lot."

Shreyosi Endow is a tea addict who likes to read poetry and is obsessed with plants. Send her a mail at endow1211s@gmail.com

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