



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA



# THE WRITER'S TERRITORY

ANUPOMA JOYEETA JOYEE

On March 23, I went to cover the Imagine Write Creatively workshop at Scholastica, Mirpur campus for the second day. As I walked through the premises towards its fairly huge gymnasium, the recent festivities of the school's 40th anniversary lingered in the air. Imagine Write Creatively is a joint initiative run by United International University (UIU) and The Daily Star (TDS), which aims to strike the creative notes within aspiring young writers in schools.

The audience of the second day was students of grade 7 to grade 12. After witnessing a successful communication with 5th and 6th graders the day before, the team was moderately paranoid at the thought of having to hold 195 teenagers' attention for 2 hours. But as it turned out, we had a good enough run to even be considered, dare I say, a clique cool enough by teenager standards.

The previous day, the workshop was kicked off by Farah Sophia Ahmed, Senior Vice Principal, Senior Campus, Scholastica, and Professor Dr. Chowdhury Mofizur Rahman, Pro Vice Chancellor, UIU. Their heartening take on the initiative was followed by the introduction of our passionate trainers Sharmin Sultana, Associate Professor of the English Department, UIU and Naziba Basher, from The Daily Star. Therefore, with proper introduction done, they dove right into the subject matter on the next day.

The warm-up game designed to get the students literally up and running totally paid off. The objective of Imagine is to get the students to actively register the fundamentals of creative writing in their minds and attend to those while writing. The entire session was interactive with all the elements of fiction writing being exemplified by the students themselves after those were pointed out and defined to them.

Their eloquent narratives clearly were a product of their passion for reading which impressively extended to classic literature - beyond the boundaries of just Harry Potter and The Hunger Games. I can safely conclude that they had a good sense of humour with a side of political correctness. The enthusiasm of this bunch of teens exceeded our expectation, albeit less than the day before. Too many students became restless only when they saw how exciting playing charades could get with 195 people. However, the number for games participants had already hit the mark.

While the trainers kept the audience enthralled by letting them create narratives with exceptional plots, characters and settings, I embarked on my favourite part



of the event: picking the brains of the students. Delving deeper into the psyche of a bunch of 8th graders, I had a flashback of my (not so gratifying) past as a shady fan-fiction writer. I did not mind throwing in words of encouragement because none of them seemed interested in writing a Twilight fan fiction.



Pushpita Pranjoli, a student of 8th grade, told me that as a result of this workshop she would consider pursuing a writer's career, preferably from SHOUT. Sameeha Kainath Nur, another one from the same class added, "This workshop was a great way to cheer on those who love to read, write and just be creative in general."

Sharmin Sultana, one of the trainers, asked of them with hopeful anticipation, "Fly with your imagination, cross all boundaries - you will find new horizons to explore and succeed."

The two-hour long workshop was only to tickle one's creative bone. Maybe it will just be a speck for those who already went through a gigantic mass of soul-searching before they wrote their first story. But for those who never pursued writing in fear of not knowing where to start, this might have been exactly the right piece of the puzzle.

Anupoma Joyeeta Joyee is a perpetually sleepy Law student who emotionally identifies with ducks and occasionally sets out on writing sprees. Feel free to rant to her at [anupomajoyee@gmail.com](mailto:anupomajoyee@gmail.com)

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