



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA



How do you show a story?

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On a fine, sunny (too sunny for my liking) Thursday (April 27), I made my way to Bashundhara in order to observe the latest installment of Imagine - Write Creatively, a joint venture of The Daily Star (TDS) and United International University (UIU). The beneficiaries of this unique workshop were the 5th and 6th graders of Hurdco International School. It was held at the premises of the school.

The session was inaugurated by the principal, Dr. M. Jinnat Ali, who encouraged the students to participate with enthusiasm. It began at 10 in the morning with flocks of students seated in a sizable lecture room. The workshop with the objective of improving creative writing started at a fast paced tempo from the very beginning and was conducted by the efficient Sharmin Sultana who is an assistant professor at UIU, and Naziba Basher, who is affiliated with The Daily Star. With examples of Harry Potter and other contemporary stories, they carried out the sessions with ease and grace.

An incorporation of a warm-up exercise got the pulses racing and the rate of participation picked up as the sessions got more engaging. The constant interactive sessions among the participants and the instructors kept them on the edge of their seats. The whole workshop revolved



around the essence of storytelling with the inclusion of plots, settings and characters. A different notion was introduced to the table where their imagination and creativity had to be in motion unlike other days at school, and the responses were impressive.

In a particular session where the students had to fabricate a background story against a displayed image of a character, they came up with brilliant anecdotes. When the image of a man

with an evil and deformed face was shown, a participant gained praises by pointing out that although the visage of the character gave off a vibe of malice, he could be good at heart but thoroughly misjudged because of people being superficial and judgmental. This was a personally stirring moment, as I realised the main objective of the workshop was to teach how to imagine.

The tricks of how to create a great character with appropriate milieu was

taught and the students picked them up with curiosity. Apart from the basic physical descriptions and history of the characters, they also learned how to make the character deal with conflict and grant it objectives. After this, they were instructed to select a character from an issue of SHOUT which they were provided before the event started. The selected character had to be brought to life with their power of creativity, and it stood out as the highlight of the day.

They were further enlightened with mechanism of settings and plots which too involved various sessions and respective engaging tasks. Uproarious feedbacks filled the big classroom as more images were shown, and the students were asked to compare and contrast those. One of the students ended up drawing similarities between a school and a castle claiming both to be "torturous", to roaring applause.

The two hour session ended with the exact zeal it started with without dropping pace for a single moment. At the end, two of the students volunteered to summarise the whole session with interesting examples which manifested the fact that they had devoured all the knowledge that was parted with excitement. I exited the premise with a smile on my face, thinking about the new and strong foundation they had been given from which new budding writers will sprout any day now.

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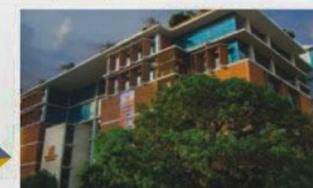


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