

## **Coffeehouse with the Writers Studio**

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April 27, 2025

TRAVERSE CITY - When asked about notable features of their class, students in Writers Studio at Northwest Ed's Career Tech often mention coffeehouse. These events are held multiple times each year, often at the end of one of the school year's quarters. The cozy classroom is turned into a working auditorium, with the spinning chairs arranged into rows facing the front. At these coffeehouses, students are asked to read their work for the standard time of three minutes in intervals introduced by a rotating duo of MCs. At the intermission, all attendees flock to the buffet off to the side, which for the past two years has been dominated by multiple jars of pickles.

This classroom tradition is just one requirement that prompts students to venture beyond their comfort zone and into the spotlight, slowly chipping away at any stage fright that might exist. It also provides an opportunity for the class to partner with outside individuals.

### 2023-24: A Day with Film and New Media

On October 27, 2023, Writers Studio students held their first coffeehouse of the school year. Partnered with Film and New Media, the event grew into a small student showcase. The Writers Studio classroom filled up with students from both programs after the bell rang, and, halfway through the class period, the roles reversed. Writing students were welcomed into the Film and New Media classroom with popcorn for their viewing of fall-themed B-rolls of film. It was a

switch from specialized word choices to visual atmospheres, and the beginning of what will hopefully lead both classes to work together for an audio unit.

#### 2024-25: Happy Holidays Writers Studio Alumni

For the final coffeehouse before the Winter break between 2024 and 2025, seven alumni returned to the close-knit community that is the Writers Studio program for an "Alumni Panel" where they talked about their lives after high school, including, but not limited to, their schooling, work, and the use of their skills from Writers Studio.

Studying journalism at the University of London Goldsmiths are Ella Smith and Maddie Rowney. Isabel Schmidt traveled back to Traverse City from Grand Valley State University, and Reegan Craker made the journey from Northern Michigan University. Minnie Bardenhagen explained her role on the White Pine Press team from Northwestern Michigan College, and alumni Speers recounted their experience assisting peers in New England with writing essays. All the while, Dominic Montoya-Arll has been leveling up in his training to become a librarian.

The return of the alumni was not only a reunion, but a representation of the multitude of skills encompassed in the passion that brought all individuals in the room together: writing.

Scollon, Teresa. Interview. May 5, 2025.