

## **Writers Studio: The Killian Experience**

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TRAVERSE CITY - Students need additional writing help, whether it's by knowing their work or their genre better; in the Writers Studio, this often comes in the form of invited guests to help them along their journey.

Writers Studio regularly hosts visits from experienced professionals in the writing world. These visits give aspiring writers a chance to learn from authors, editors, and other experts. With their help, students participate in workshops, ask questions, and also receive feedback, all of which help them improve their writing skills and understanding of their writing topic.

During the month of October, Karin Killian visited the Writers Studio program at Career Tech. Killian discussed, in detail, the existence and the importance of Both/And, as well as creative nonfiction. Several students were interviewed about their experience and what they learned from that visit.

### Who is Karin Killian?

Karin Killian is a reader-writer-educator from Minnesota who comes to Writers Studio yearly to teach the students creative nonfiction and fiction; the genres of which she writes her own pieces. Killian has worked in the peace corps internationally as a volunteer and teacher as well.

### What did Karin Killian teach?

One thing the Writers Studio students learned from Killian was something called Both/And.

Both/And is when you have two different perspectives of an event that just happened and both

sides can be explained. “Stories construct reality,” Killian stated. “You listen to stories from

other people around you, then decide whether or not they’re worth your time.” Jacob Trick, a

Writers Studio student, had this to say about the importance of Both/And: “[O]n a day-to-day

basis I think it’s good to know that two things can be true at once, it allows you to not be biased.

Everything [written] will be biased if only [written] from one perspective, both/and allows

[writers] to not be biased and write to a larger audience. [Despite this], I have not personally used it.”

Killian moved on from Both/And and discussed creative nonfiction. According to Killian,

“Everyone’s going to have a different perspective.” She taught the students how to write to take

agency. According to Killian, you must have control on how your story is told, and you have to

slowly sink yourself into the art of writing. The writer also taught the students the importance of

showing the full story, saying, “If we don’t tell the full story, people won’t know it.”

### Impact

Killian played an important role in guiding the Writers Studio students through their first drafts

of creative nonfiction essays. Toward the end of the allotted class time, the students reviewed

several creative nonfiction pieces to help them in their upcoming creative nonfiction unit.

According to Sadie Hodges, a Writers Studio student, “Karin Killian was really insightful and

the way she helped us practice our creative nonfiction skills was impactful to each and every

student.” Another student, Ava Heiler, said, “Karin Killian explained an exercise that could potentially help us with our future creative nonfiction essays, with this exercise we wrote down what we were an expert on which helped me understand the next steps into creative nonfiction.”