



Comparative Literature graduate student Meg Berkobien received a Comparative Literature Internship Fellowship during Winter Term of 2018 to work with 826michigan, a non-profit writing center based in Ann Arbor and Detroit that coordinates adult volunteers to work with school-aged students. Meg was the In-Residence Intern at Estabrook Elementary and Middle School in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where she developed writing programs for ELL students focused on translation and publication components. Read about her experience below!

Over the course of nine months, I had the chance to work closely with 826michigan as the In-Residence Intern at Estabrook Elementary and Middle School in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Estabrook has the largest population of Spanish-Speaking students, which allowed me to assist 826michigan in reaching out to students who might need extra attention. Each week, from Monday to Friday, I worked alongside the In-Schools Program Director, Megan Gilson, to host writing programs for third through sixth graders in our classroom.

As the school year comes to a close, we have worked with over six classes (~30 students each) on multiple projects, many of which have had a publication component (zine, chapbook, or professionally-bound book). Moreover, I participated in staff meetings, staffed the storefront, participated in Family Writing Nights, and did outside workshops for community organizations such as Peace Neighborhood Center and Jewish Family Services

Here are two projects that proved most important in connecting my dissertation work to my internship work. The first was a workshop for sixth-graders called “Zines and Social Change.” During this two-part workshop, I first taught students the brief history of the zine form and its importance in radical social justice movements and then watched as they chose their own causes to create a zine about.

The second project was a five-part translation workshop with English Language Learners at Ypsilanti Community High School called “Carrying Ourselves Across: The Art of Self-

Translation.” While the workshop was focused on translation, it was also meant to help students feel that their writing in their L1 was valued (and, hence, promote mother tongue maintenance)...

During the project, I coordinated with six volunteers who spoke French, Arabic, Farsi, and Spanish to give individualized attention to each student as they wrote their stories and crafted their translations. I worked with over six Spanish-speakers who had very limited English-Language capacities, and found that I really bonded with them all. Once we finished the project, I had one evening to design and produce the book, which the students really loved. Working with younger students has helped me develop my teaching range, and I feel confident that I can now design workshops for students from third-twelfth grade