

English Graduate Student To Present Paper at Major National Conference

Department of English Graduate Teaching Assistant, Alyssa Cavazos, will present a paper at the annual conference of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in New York City this month. Alyssa's paper, "Shaping Literacy Moments in the Student Teaching Space" will document her experiences during her student teaching internship, particularly her realization that her own experience as an ESL student provided a pedagogically meaningful connection between herself and her English Language Learners. Dr. Beatrice Mendez Newman, who will also present a paper at NCTE, encouraged Alyssa to document her internship experiences by keeping a student teaching journal and mentored her in preparing the NCTE proposal. Alyssa's and Dr. Newman's presentations will examine the role of teacher preparation, internship, and on-going mentoring in creating student-centered pedagogy for English Language Learners. "NCTE is a highly competitive conference; all proposals are read by at least two judges, and to be accepted for a spot on the program, the proposal must earn top ratings from both judges," explains Dr. Newman. The four-day conference draws thousands of K through college English educators from throughout the United States. In Spring 2008, Alyssa will present the results of her thesis research at the Conference of College Composition and Communication (CCCC), one of the most prestigious conferences in rhetoric and composition. Dr. Newman is directing Alyssa's thesis which examines the connections between the classroom pedagogical environment and students' improvement in writing, and she mentored Alyssa in preparing the CCCC proposal. Also in Spring 2008, Alyssa will present a paper at the conference of the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies. This will be a 25-minute presentation on Alyssa's work in analyzing the colloquial Spanish in the writing of Tomas Rivera, a major project she completed in Dr. Rob Johnson's South Texas Writers graduate class this past summer. Dr. Johnson mentored Alyssa in preparing and submitting the proposal for this conference.