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Dornak wins Innovations in Technology Award

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. – Dr. Lynnette Dornak, assistant professor of geography at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, recently received the inaugural Innovations in Technology for Teaching and Learning Award from UW-Platteville’s Information Technology Services and Teaching and Technology Center for her project “Augmented Reality Sandbox for 3D Conceptualization of Geographic Concepts.”

The Innovations in Technology for Teaching and Learning Award program provides faculty and teaching academic staff with funds to purchase technology that has the potential to improve teaching and learning, with preference given to projects that are innovative, scalable, adaptable and applicable to teaching in all disciplines.

The \$3,500 award will enable Dornak to purchase an Augmented Reality Sandbox, a special technology that offers an innovative approach to teaching Earth science concepts by combining 3D visualization and real-time mapping with a simple sandbox. The components of the AR Sandbox will be assembled and tested this summer and be ready for class use in early fall.

“Lynnette is an innovative presence in the classroom,” said Dr. Melissa Gormley, interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Education at UW-Platteville. “This award will help support her excellent work.”

The AR Sandbox will provide students with a hands-on and interactive mapping tool. As students reshape the surface of the sand in the AR Sandbox, a camera and projector – both suspended above the sandbox – capture those changes and conceptualize the surface into a 3D elevation color map with topographic contour lines and simulated water.

“In geography, we pride ourselves on offering high-impact practices to UW-Platteville students,” said Dornak. “The Augmented Reality Sandbox will assist us in our constant pursuit to provide cutting-edge, interactive learning opportunities for our students. It will provide students a unique and captivating hands-on experience that will broaden their knowledge (and hopefully their interest) in the natural sciences.”

Dornak will be required to prepare a written final report in addition to presenting her proposal/work-in-progress and findings at two events jointly sponsored by Information Technology Services and the Teaching and Learning Center.

Dornak has taught at UW-Platteville since 2014, specializing in Geographic Information Systems, biogeography, ecological niche modeling, spatial analysis and remote sensing.

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