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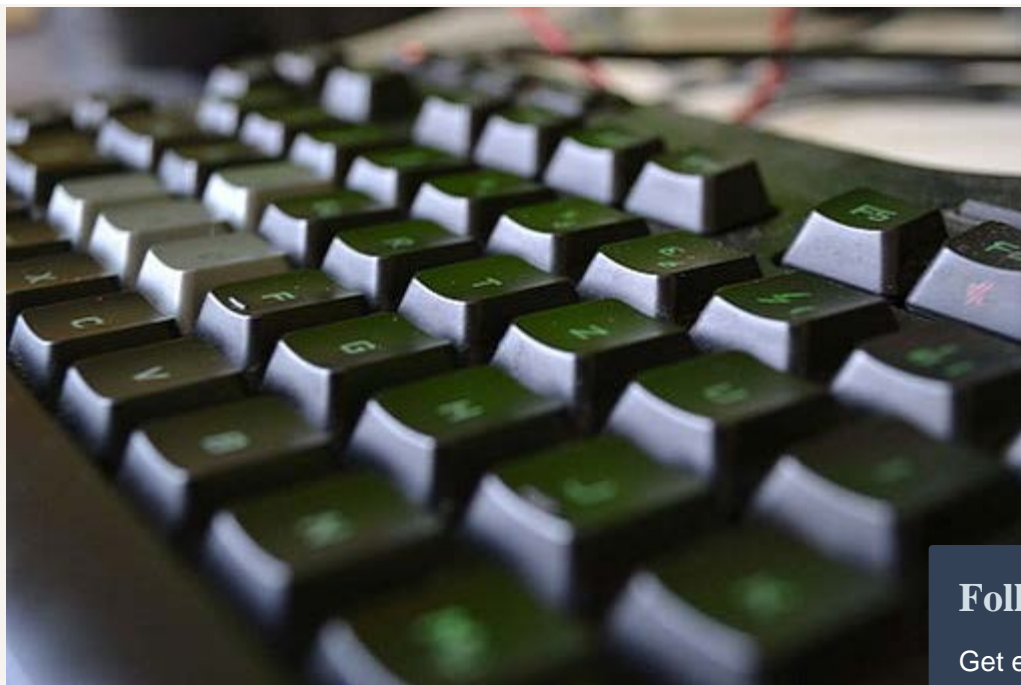
Alumni Voices: Ph.D. alumna Dr. Carly Kocurek named Nayar Prize finalist

by American

Studies

AMS :: ATX is a blog dedicated to representing the many activities and interests of the department of American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. Together with the department’s Twitter feed, this blog exists to serve the AMS and Austin communities by acting as a hub for up-to-date information on events and opportunities at UT and beyond.



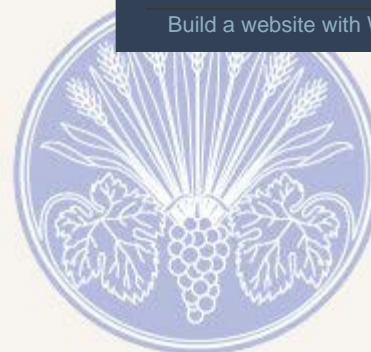


Hearty congratulations to **Dr. Carly Kocurek**, who was named a finalist for the Illinois Institute of Technology's **Nayar Prize**, an award “established to encourage and challenge Illinois Tech faculty, staff, and students to develop breakthrough, innovative projects that will, within three years, produce meaningful results with a societal impact.”

Dr. Kocurek, along with fellow IIT faculty members Jennifer Miller, Cynthia Hood, and Matt Bauer, proposed to create a videogame designed to foster language development among young children. They were awarded \$100,000 to develop their project, a description of which we've pasted below:

Inequalities in early childhood language have a lasting impact on individual success, both in academics and careers. These inequalities inflate social

FO



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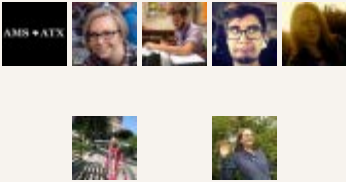
welfare costs and slow economic growth. Our goal is to increase language skills necessary for academic success and subsequent economic success. Our innovation would leverage serious game design to produce a research-driven, high-impact interactive game for children aged 24–36 months. Children who use the interactive game will learn more words and be better prepared to succeed in school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently revised guidelines on screen use and suggests that media can be used constructively in children after the age of 2. Our game will combine community-based participatory research and cutting-edge understanding of language acquisition and learning. This project draws on perspectives from developmental psychology, linguistics, game design, and computer science, and our team is uniquely poised to combine insights and breakthroughs from a diversity of disciplines. Team members bring with them experience in language learning, serious game development, assessment, and other key areas.

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The game will engage both caregivers and children through a playful learning experience that encourages high-quality interaction and engagement. The initial goal is to develop an individual game, but in the long run this will spark widespread development and rigorous testing toward optimizing educational experiences for young children.

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This entry was posted in Alumni Voices and tagged award, childhood, language, social justice, video game.

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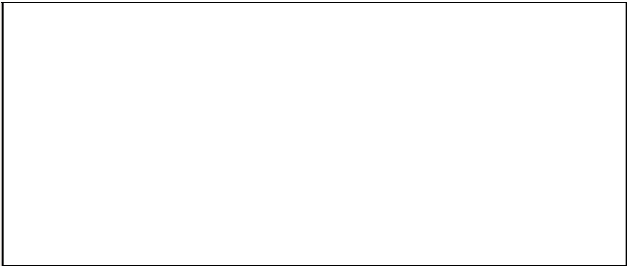
2015-2016 school year!

- Alumni Voices: Dr. John Gronbeck-Tedesco, Asst. Prof. of American Studies, Ramapo College
- Announcement: Workshop with media artist Samuel Cepeda this Friday

Tweets

- RT @HouserHeather: TODAY, 11am: TILTS Discussion of LIVING OIL w @LeMenagerUO, @ut_english Professor Ann Cvetkovich, & @AmStudies PhD candi... 5 hours ago
- RT @HouserHeather: TODAY, 6pm: TILTS, @ut_english, @AmStudies present Stephanie LeMenager on Oil Culture & Environmental Humanities <https://...> 1 day ago
- Emily Roehl and Jeanette Vaught Giving Talks on Friday 2/12 amstudies.wordpress.com/2016/02/11/emi... <https://t.co/nh2aFWZWn7> 1 day ago
- RT @NotEvenPast: Smallpox as a Cold War weapon @LiberalArtsUT @OBUColdWarrior @coldwarhist @AmStudies @ut_CREEES notevenpast.org/smallpox-eradi... 1 day ago
- Is there a place for fakery in art galleries and museums? aeon.co/essays/is-ther... 2 days ago

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