



NEWS RELEASE

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ISKME Garners Prestigious OPAL Award for Outstanding Achievement in Open Educational Resources Policy

*OER Commons Teacher Training Initiative Recognized
By International Online Learning Consortium*

Half Moon Bay, Calif. – Dec. 6, 2011 – An international committee last week selected the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) as the winner of the prestigious 2011 OPAL Award. ISKME was recognized for its OER Commons Teacher Training Initiative in the category honoring effectiveness among organizations that influence policy.

Announced at the annual Online Educa Berlin conference, the largest global online education conference, the selection process is managed by the Open Educational Quality (OPAL) Initiative, a consortium that includes UNESCO, the International Council for Open and Distance Education, the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning, and several European universities. The OPAL Initiative works to promote open educational practices which support the production, use, and reuse of open educational resources (OER).

ISKME's OER Commons Teacher Training Initiative offers teachers a collaborative professional development model centered on engagement with OER. Since 2009, ISKME has trained over 1,500 teachers from 25 countries in its program focused on collaborative innovation and social learning using open curriculum and teacher-led approaches. In 2011, ISKME launched a Green OER Commons micro-site with Greek partner Agro-Know, delivering sustainability-related learning resources and interdisciplinary lesson plans, including a focus on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) resources.

“Open educational resources support and accelerate the spread of shared teacher expertise and peer-based learning,” said Lisa Petrides, president and founder of ISKME. “The openly available classroom materials include adaptable curricula that support learner-centric approaches. The use of open educational resources enables learners, educators, and policymakers improve the quality of educational material and increases the professionalism of teaching in the process.”

OER Commons (www.oercommons.org), publicly launched in February 2007, provides a curated library and knowledge base for the search and discovery of OER. Created with and for educators, students, and self-learners, OER Commons provides useful classroom materials that help students engage with rigorous subject matter. As a network for teaching and learning materials, the OER Commons offers engagement with resources in the form of social bookmarking, tagging, rating, reviewing, and online professional development.

An independent, nonprofit research institute, ISKME was launched in 2002 by researcher and former professor Lisa Petrides who, along with a team of educators, conducted a series of ground-breaking studies on data and information use in major urban school districts, community colleges, and other crucial parts of the education sector. Based in Half Moon Bay, Calif., ISKME conducts social science research, develops research-based innovations, and facilitates field building to improve knowledge sharing in education. ISKME helps K-20 education and the organizations that support it build capacity to collect and share information, apply it to well-defined problems, and create knowledge-driven environments focused on learning and success.

The OER Commons Teacher Training Initiative is generously underwritten by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (www.iskme.org) located in Half Moon Bay, Calif., is a global leader in research and practice around data use, open education, and social learning in the education sector. An independent, non-profit organization established in 2002, ISKME is well-known for its OER Commons initiative (www.oercommons.org), as well as its award winning international research on knowledge management in the education sector.