



Media Release – The OPAL Awards 2011

Introduction to the OPAL Awards

The winners of the OPAL Awards 2011 were announced in a ceremony at the Online Educa Berlin conference on 2 December.

The OPAL Awards for quality and innovation through open educational practices recognise outstanding achievements in the fields of open educational resources policy and promotion and use of OER. Open educational resources are learning materials which are made freely available for others to adapt and use. The Awards were launched to provide exposure and recognition for successful open educational practices, a new concept of best practices in the use and production of freely available resources.

The OPAL Awards are conceived as part of the Open Educational Quality (OPAL) Initiative www.oer-quality.org, supported by the European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme. The OPAL Initiative consists of partners including UNESCO, the International Council for Open and Distance Education, the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning and a number of leading European universities.

The OPAL Initiative has published guidelines for open educational practices, has developed databases of best practices at individual and educational institution levels, and has worked to influence policy in colleges and universities, and at the national and regional level. The OPAL Awards are the culmination of this project, to showcase achievements in policy, institutions, and learning contexts, and to demonstrate that these lead to improvement of quality and innovation.

The Awards attracted entries from around the world, and an international jury of at least 3 prominent experts was formed for each of the 3 awards.

The Award for Bodies which Influence Policy

The Award for Bodies which Influence Policy is given to a global, regional or national organization providing the conditions or resources for open educational practices, or encouraging excellence in open educational practices.

The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (IKSME), USA www.iskme.org was selected as winner. In its statement, the jury concluded that ISKME has proven its effectiveness in providing teachers with the tools and skills to challenge policy in their institutions and home countries from the bottom-up. The Institute has both inspired and disseminated policies to other parts of the world, having worked with teachers from 25 countries, uses a Wiki to provide continual support to its stakeholders, and demonstrates strong partnerships – including with Africa.

The jury for this Award consisted of Anthony Camilleri of the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning (Chair), Minh Do, VOER Program Director at The Vietnam Foundation, and Dr. Bianca Maria Santana de Brito of The University of São Paulo, Brazil.

The Award for Institutions

The Award for Institutions recognizes institutions with a policy of encouraging open educational practices through the provision of resources and support for the development of OER, participation in research and development, and a clear strategy for motivating its staff.

University of California, Irvine www.uci.edu was selected as winner. It is a mature initiative that also shows evidence of strong impact in a developing country, namely Brazil. The jury noted that the project has shown successful self-development by making open educational resources a fundamental feature of the university, and that it shows evidence of strong leadership both within the institution and externally

Acharya Narendra Dev College, University of Delhi, India <http://andcollege.du.ac.in> was awarded highly commended status in this category for demonstrating strong motivation to change traditional patterns of teaching and a robust process for encouraging the creation of OER based on a self-funding model. The jury gave special mention to the College's work with the University of Mumbai to spread use and reuse externally, and its work to overcome faculty resistance to change.

The jury for this award was Professor Narend Baijnath, Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of South Africa, Professor Roberto Carneiro of The Catholic University of Portugal, Dr Emma Kruse Va'ai, Deputy Vice Chancellor of The National University of Samoa and Professor Rory McGreal, Associate Vice President at Athabasca University, Canada (Chair).

Ingeborg Boe, Member of the Executive Board of the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning and of the Board of Trustees of the International Council for Open and Distance Education, presented this award at the ceremony. Larry Cooperman, Director, OpenCourseWare at The University of California, Irvine, USA collected the winner award, while Dr. Savithri Singh, Principal, Acharya Narendra Dev College, University of Delhi, India, was represented by Dr. Hemlata Chari of the University of Mumbai.

The Award for Learning contexts

The Award for Learning Contexts is awarded to learning professionals who produce OER, who actively share their work, and who motivate and inspire their colleagues. Submissions were required to provide learner statements as testament to the successful incorporation of student feedback, and communication to students of the value of openness.

The winning project was **Open Science Resources** www.openscienceresources.eu, a Europe-wide initiative submitted by Ellinogermaniki Agogi - Research and Development Department, Greece. The jury praised the project for demonstrating evidence of a truly significant contribution to teaching and learning in science as well as a solid hold of the principles surrounding OER. "The originality and clarity of the project are impressive and it has potential to be applied internationally. It makes available a range of resources from European Museums and Science Centres and encourages educators and others to contribute new resources, making use of an impressive tool to create learning pathways."

The LORO Project <http://loro.open.ac.uk> developed by the Department of Languages at the Open University UK was awarded highly commended status by the international jury. The jury noted that although the initiative is currently internally focused, it has the potential to be a showcase for other institutions. "It is anchored in a clear vision and strategy and aims fundamentally to change the practice of both academics and student teachers to include processes of sharing, showcasing, adapting and re-using resources."

The jury for the learning contexts award was composed of Jenny Glennie, Executive Director at the South African Institute for Distance Education, Dr. Carl Holmberg, Former Secretary General of the International Council for Open and Distance Education (Chair), and Professor Fred Litto, President of the Brazilian Association for Distance Education (ABED).

The awards were presented by Dr. Luciano Sathler, Vice-President of ABED, representing Professor Litho, and were collected by Eleftheria Tsourlidaki from Ellinogermaniki Agogi - Research and Development Department, Greece and Anna Comas-Quinn of the Department of Languages at the Open University UK.

Further information, photographs and videos of the winning entries: www.oer-quality.org

Contact: Nick Moe-Pryce, Information Office, International Council for Open and Distance Education, pryce@icde.org, +47 22 06 26 32

This project has been carried out with the support of the European Community. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the position of the European Community, nor does it involve any responsibility on the part of the European Community.

