



Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](#) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

Writing for Success



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Textbook Author:
Scott McLean

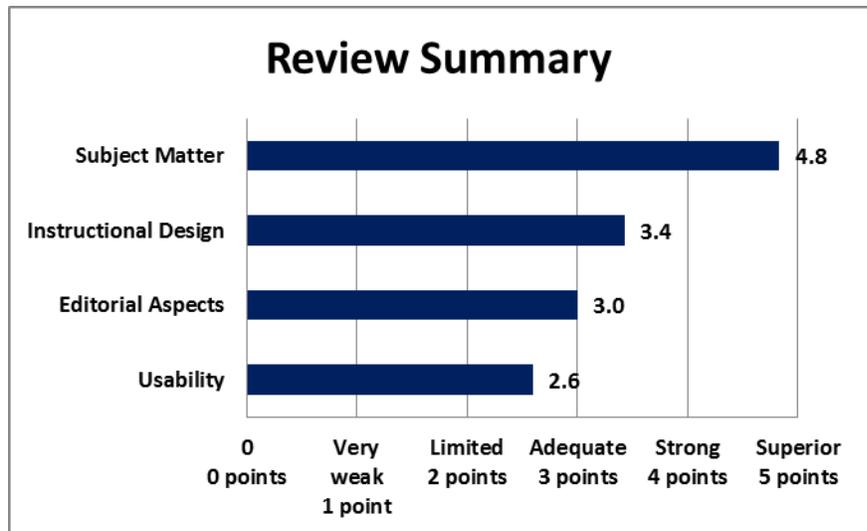
Reviewed by:
Sabrina Nelson

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College

Title/Position:
Professor

Format
Reviewed:
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Date Reviewed:
March 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [ENGL 105](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?						X
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?						X
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?						X

Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?						X
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						X

Total Points: 29 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- Good illustrations of note-taking techniques, more intuitive alternatives to sentence diagrams, nice examples of a mind map, good illustrations of various writing, throughout, such as business email, outlines and other typical writing assignments.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?						X
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)						X
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?						X
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?			X			
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?			X			
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)			X			
Is the textbook searchable?				X		

Total Points: 24 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- I gave the book a lower mark for meeting the goals of the designated course, because the course is English 105, a critical thinking course, which is more advanced than English 1a, yet the material provided in the book seems to be geared more toward an English 1a audience.
- There are good short lessons and self-assessments throughout, but I would like to see a study guide and maybe more exercises that focus on rhetorical analysis or compare/contrast of new media sources (TED talks, etc.)

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?						X
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?				X		
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)				X		
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)			X			
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)			X			

Total Points: 15 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook:

- While the overall content of the book is well written and effective, it needs some basic navigation elements like a click-able table of contents. The only table of contents is provided on the website and it just gives chapter names, not page numbers. The book needs color, more imagery and a more eye-catching layout. The overall design is efficient but dated. There are good graphics to illustrate types of writing. There is good use of color to call out lessons, exercises and learning outcomes. Yet there are no pictures that feature current events, and the text alone can become a bit dry at times. I think this book

would be great for an adult learner, but for a student fresh out of high school, there needs to be more of a visual hook.

Usability (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?						X
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)				X		
Can the textbook be printed easily?			X			
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?		X				
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?			X			

Total Points: 13 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- The book comes as a basic PDF, which can be read by virtually anything, with varying degrees of success. How accessible the book actually is, depends on the reader software used. Without a table of contents, the only sure way for a student to find something is to use a basic keyword search, but again, this is depending on the PDF reading software. At 613 pages, the book is too cost prohibitive to print for an average student. It could possibly work well with Kurzweil 3000, if a college district has this installed. The advantage to using this with Kurzweil 3000 would be advanced annotation, and tools for readability, and easier navigation, despite the lack of a table of contents.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?					X	
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
			X			

Total Points: 6 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- Excellent foundation in the basics of academic writing; exceptional coverage of grammar.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- I'd be more willing to adopt it if those could be fixed -- adding a table of contents would go a long way in improving functionality, for example. Needs more imagery, needs links to online content like TED talks, etc.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#) (Please [register](#) in MERLOT to post your feedback.)



For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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