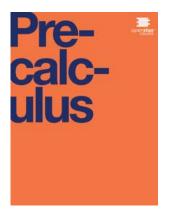# Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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 etextboks 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:

Precalculus

License:

Precalculus by Jay Abramson, et al. is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0

Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Authors:

Jay Abramson, et al.
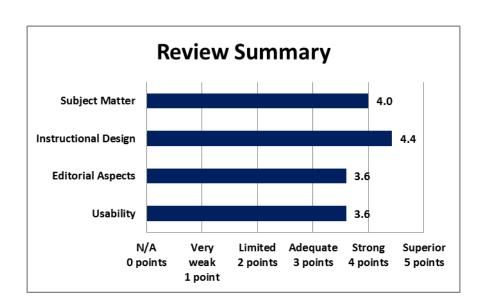
Reviewed by:

Kristin Webster

Institution:

California State University, Los Angeles

Title/Position:

Professor

Format Reviewed:

Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Review Summary

Subject Matter	4.0
Instructional Design	4.4
Editorial Aspects	3.6
Usability	3.6

| N/A 0 points | Very weak 1 point | Limited 2 points | Adequate 3 points | Strong 4 points | Superior 5 points |

Date Reviewed:

May 2016

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: MATH 155

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	

	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
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: 24 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:
- The textbook covered the standard topics of most precalculus courses. There was nothing in the content that distinguished this book from other precalculus textbooks.
- The examples and exercises were also relatively standard. The exercises are complete and provide a good set of problems for students to work on.
- The textbook has PowerPoint Slides, Instructor Solutions Manuals, and is aligned with several popular online low cost homework platforms (WebAssign, TopHat, and xyzHomework).

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: 31 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:
- In particular, the online version of this text has a nice layout. This was particularly useful on my smart phone. The content is organized and nicely laid out.
- Each section begins with a specific explanation of learning outcomes. The exercises and examples illustrate and assess the learning outcomes directly.
- I think that most instructors choose a book based on the set of exercises and this book has a solid set of exercises.

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 latid0out 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: 18 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook:
- The linked videos are a nice addition.

- The other graphs and pictures are colorful and easy to interpret.
- The language is direct and easy to read. It contains the basic descriptions of concepts and examples. However, there is nothing engaging about the text. I think students will read it as a reference, i.e. look things up. It's doubtful it will be used as something to read to learn from.

Usability (25 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: 18 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook:
- The online version is not able to be annotated. I think students will prefer the online version to the pdf if they are only using it electronically. However, I still think many students will be printing the pdf.

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		
	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
How willing would you be to adopt this book?			X			

Total Points: 5 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?
- It's free.
- It's easy to use and the exercises are good.
- In fact, I think it's as good as most of the $150-200 textbooks out there.   I'm not sure why more instructors wouldn't choose this text.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?
- It's personally not my instructional taste. I like for a textbook to hint at more of the underlying concepts. Students don't generally read math textbooks but if they do, they should be rewarded by getting something to think about and not just sets of definitions/theorems/facts.