Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks
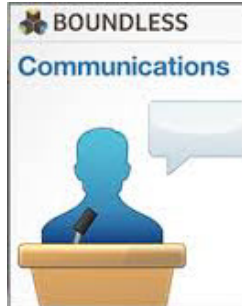
The California Open Educational Resources Council has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected no/low cost 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:

Communications

License:

Find it: eTextbook Website

Reviewed by:

Jacqueline Irwin, Ph.D.

Institution:

California State University, Sacramento

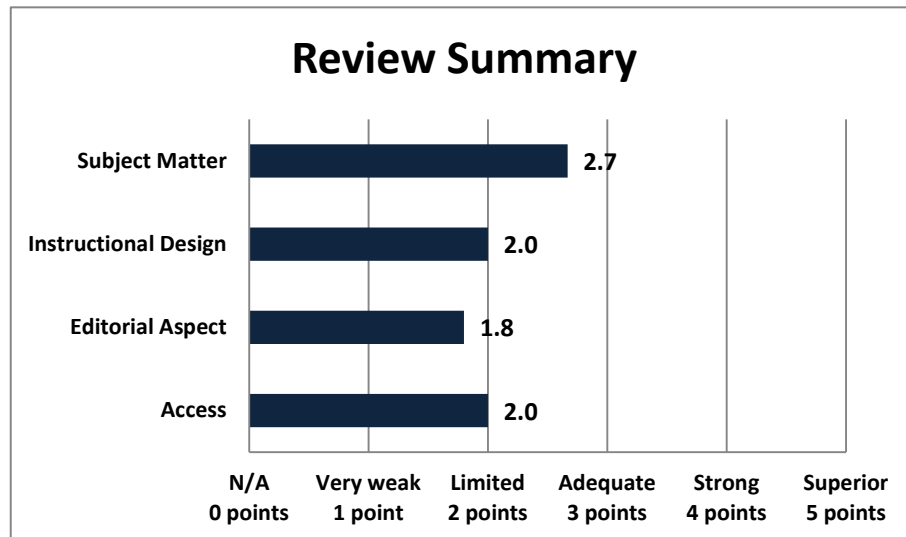Title/Position:

Assistant Professor, Communication Studies

Format Reviewed:

Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

August, 2014

Review Summary

Subject Matter	2.7
Instructional Design	2.0
Editorial Aspect	1.8
Access	2.0

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

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: COMM 110

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,				X		

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						

Total Points: 16 out of 30

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

No comment.

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: 14 out of 35 points

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

This organization is very confusing. The chapters are divided into very small sections that have to be accessed individually. Where to click and how to get to them is very unclear. I had to email the coordinator to get further instructions on accessing this material..

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: 9 out of 25

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

They say something like "Reading 3 minutes." Putting expectations in front of students that they should/could read something in a set time adds way too much pressure to those who can't read quickly or at a certain level.

Access (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		

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

The interface is not good and is extremely hard to get to the actual information.

Overall Ratings (10 possible points)	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				

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?
- You can pick and choose sections to assign (how that works or how that interface would look like, isn't clear to this user).

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?
- The interface! I'm not sure that I could explain to someone how this website functions.
- I also don't care for the lack of ability to view/print an entire chapter at a time.
  There are too many barriers to getting to the information (and isn't that the point?).

We invite your feedback on the textbook or the review to the textbook site in MERLOT.
(Please register in MERLOT to post your feedback.)

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COUNCIL
CSU+CCC+UC

For questions or more information, contact the CA Open Educational Resources Council