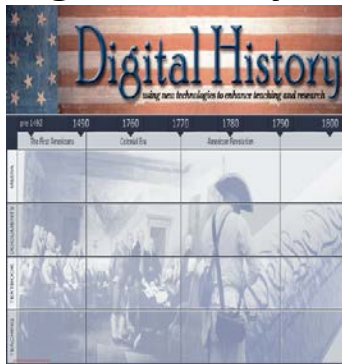# Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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:

Digital History

Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Author:
Sara McNeil

Reviewed by:

Kevin Dawson

Institution:

University of California, Merced
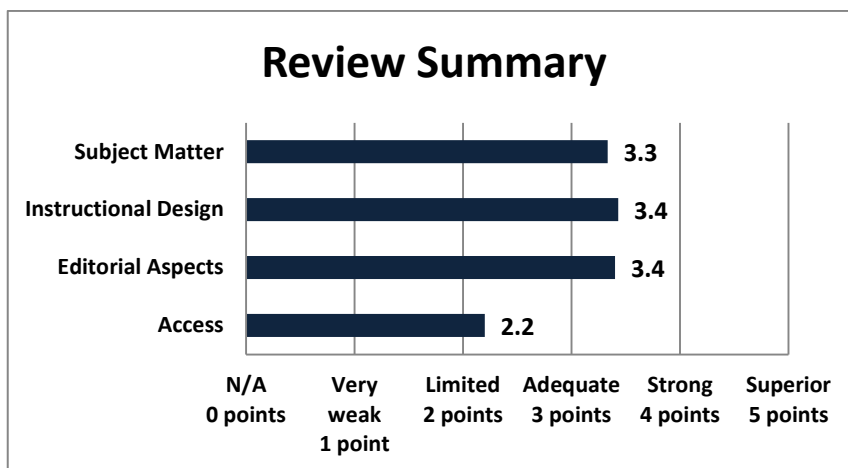
Title/Position:

Assistant Professor, History

Format Reviewed:

Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

August, 2014.

Review Summary

Category	Score
Subject Matter	3.3
Instructional Design	3.4
Editorial Aspects	3.4
Access	2.2

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: HIST 130

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		

Subject Matter (30 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 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: 20 out of 30

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

- Provides a concise balanced history, but it's a rather flat read that doesn't allow the reader to engage with the past. The book offers a macro-level understanding of the past, without allowing for a nuanced understanding of daily life and social and cultural interactions. This is fine if professors want primary sources, lectures, and discussions to fill this gap.
- Introduced but didn't fully develop/explain some topics. For example, it described the origins of the Salem Witch Hunts and their relationship to King Philip's War but did not strongly situate it within its historical context or explain how the events played out.

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 points

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

- It was a bit confusing trying to figure out how to navigate the textbook; I always felt like I might not be in the right spot.
- Also, the website has different tabs for the textbook, images, bios of people, primary sources, etc. The images, primary sources, etc. are great; however, they don't seem to be linked to the textbook, so you read the book without seeing any of the images or having links to the primary sources. Professors already have a difficult time trying to get students to make connections between historical sources and events, seems like this format will provide challenges.

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: 17 out of 25 points

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

- As previously mentioned, the book is a rather flat read and doesn't provide a lot of depth and substance.

Access (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: 11 out of 25 points

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

- This is my weakest area of expertise hence mostly adequate scores...

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: 3 out of 10 points

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?
- I probably wouldn't recommend this book.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?
- Make the text more engaging by including more detail, nuance, and personal accounts.
- Merge the images, primary sources, and textbook, rather than placing them under discrete tabs.

> 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.)

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COUNCIL
CSU + CCC + UC

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