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:

Sound Reasoning
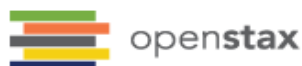
License:

Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Authors:
Anthony Brandt

Reviewed by:
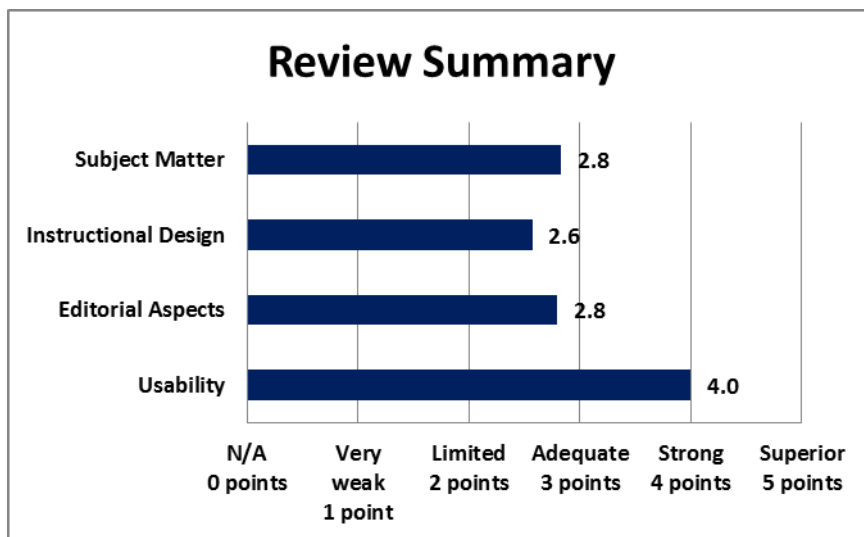Elizabeth Waterbury

Institution:
Shasta College

Title/Position:
Professor

Format Reviewed:
Online
A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Review Summary

Subject Matter	2.8
Instructional Design	2.6
Editorial Aspects	2.8
Usability	4.0

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

Date Reviewed:
December 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric
CA Course ID: MUS 100

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		

ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						

Total Points: 17 out of 30

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

- This course is an intelligent and innovative approach to the subject. The author has created a unique vocabulary to explain music topics, but then describes those ideas using typical music words like rhythm, meter, major, minor etc. The average student would be lost in such abstraction. As a music prof I enjoyed it very much. Students would have to learn not only those standard music words but his unique vocabulary.   They would not be able to take those ideas into other humanities courses, thereby losing an important cross-disciplinary advantage. There are some wonderful approaches here, but I cannot recommend it.
- Compared to a standard music appreciation textbook, there is a dearth of visual images to connect to the material. No graphs or art work.   No test banks. There is a listening example section with self-checking drop-down bars.   No summative assessments.

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: 18 out of 35

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

- The text is well-organized within its own logic.
- The musical examples are very good, with an emphasis on scholarly composers.
- The embedded audio files are easy to play.
- The drop down table of contents outlines the course well.
- There is a glossary. However, compared to most text books in the field, the text is difficult and obscure.
- While the innovation is admirable, it wouldn't help a typical online college student.

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: 14 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- Visuals are lacking.
- Audio files are useable, but perhaps a few more contemporary music examples would help. Jazz and folk, at least.
- Ending chapters are helpful but should be a part of the opening chapters.

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: 20 out of 25

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

- The author invites readers to add to the course, especially jazz and folk.

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

Overall Comments

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

- Great audio files.
- Innovative and unique approach.
- Some modules are thoughtful and even brilliant.
- Audio files are designed for the short attention span of today's students.

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

- Realign content to more traditional mainstream Music Appreciation.
- Consider creating a simpler vocabulary.
- Use more visuals and graphics.
- Give the students a sense of building and timeline.

> 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.)

CALIFORNIA
OER
COUNCIL
CSU + CCC + UC

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