



Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) 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:

Writing Commons



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

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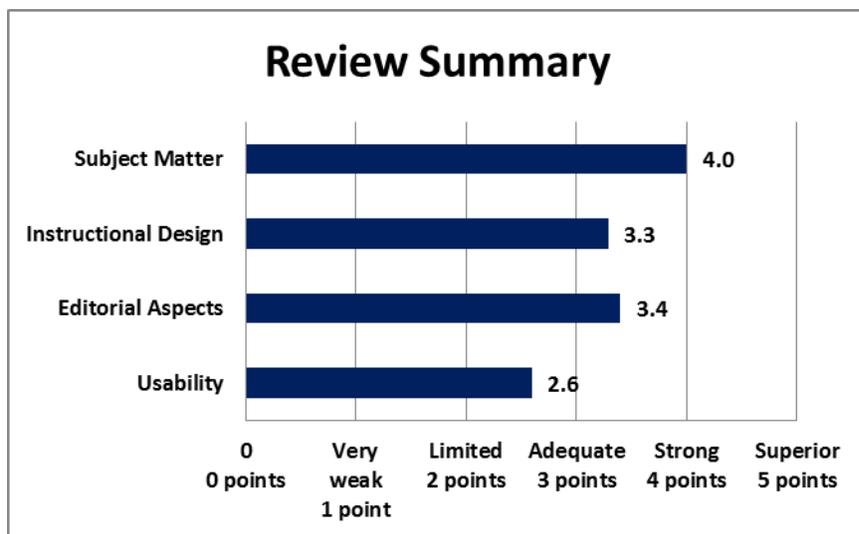
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



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: 24 out of 30

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

- Textbook is a good fit for first year composition, writing, and argumentative writing courses, although courses with a heavy emphasis on critical thinking may need supplementary materials.
- In general, the textbook is sound and up to date in its instruction and examples. Some sections may feel a bit too basic or limited depending on student needs and skill level; for example, the video describing how to write an argument relies on a very basic description of essentially, a five paragraph essay format, which may not be appropriate/useful for all instructors/students/courses. More sophisticated work on genre could better frame the sections on academic and professional writing.

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: 23 out of 35

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

- Students/teachers should be easily able to navigate the text after spending a bit of time acclimating to the top and left navigations and the previous/next navigations at the bottom of the page. Page sections are compressed by using “read more” links; this is helpful so that readers can get the overview of a given section, and then dig deeper by clicking the ‘read more’ links. The textbook occasionally provides helpful “see also” links to related pages at bottom of the page, but not always.
- Search function is strong and usable. Few exercises or activities are provided, so instructors will likely have to supplement/create these on their own. Similarly, no SLOs are provided.

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: 17 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- Some links to exercises or videos are broken (e.g. Critical Reading, Exercise 1; Pathos video; second video in Remediation) and other video resources might be productively revised or shortened for efficacy.

Further references, glossary, and more visual representations could be included to strengthen both the content and the visual appeal/ease of the text. Overall, when links work, the majority of multimedia elements are strong and useful. Links in a different color would help readers identify when material is hyperlinked; additional hyperlinks/resources could further strengthen this textbook, as would further subcategories in the left nav TOC.

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.

- **Printability:** FAQs list print and ePUB options as “not yet,” suggesting future development along these lines.

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: 7 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- This resource is well-rounded and includes solid process and rhetorical content (indeed, the rhetorical content housed under “process” might be foregrounded a bit more).

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

- More substantive content on genre and on critical thinking could further strengthen this resource.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)
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For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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