



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 etextbooks 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:

English Composition

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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Author:

Lumen Learning

Reviewed by:

Michelle Baptiste

Institution:

University of California, Berkeley

Title/Position:

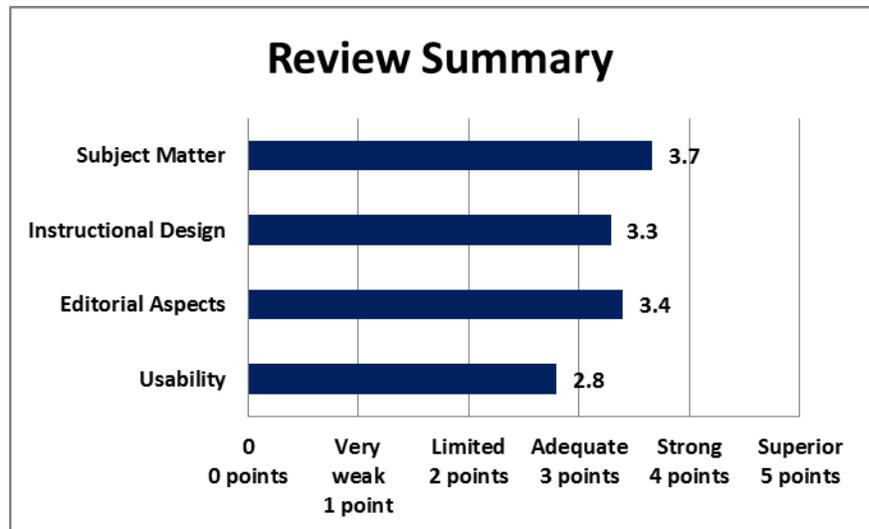
Professor

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						X

examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						
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Total Points: 22 out of 30

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

- I appreciate the inclusion of Anne Lamott in a video interview in the section on Writing Process. Under Editing & Proofreading a Six Traits -1 Rubric (no Voice category) is included that outlines key revision questions well.
- The text is organized around 5 categories of essays: narrative, illustration/example, compare/contrast, cause and effect, and argument. Annotation assignments are outlined before each assigned essay, and reflection questions are provided after each essay.
- The linked reading texts/genre samples and videos are laudably diverse. The syntax and grammar sections contain useful, high-interest videos to explain everything from subject-verb agreement to sentence types, run-ons to apostrophes.

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:

- It seems the instructor could log in and customize this site, tailor it to his/her own course needs. The text lays out distinct patterned modules to teach the course.

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.

- Videos effectively explain terms like plagiarism and annotation with attention-getting graphics and audio. Rubrics are provided as templates to aid instructors in assessing students at every juncture.
- It was jarring to see "audience" misspelled twice on the two narrative rubrics, but it seems, as a trait to assess, audience disappeared in later assignments or was mentioned in descriptions only--and spelled correctly.
- The visuals are rather plain -- a bare minimum feeling, as the only images are occasionally interspersed

videos. The text is not overwhelming, though, in that it is organized under headings and often in bullet points.

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: 14 out of 25

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

- This book appears to use the Canvas (course site) platform, so instructors could adapt the site to their class needs and automatically generate a syllabus, calendar, etc., I think, but I'm not sure as Paul Powell is listed as the instructor now.
- Some pages with well-known published work are unavailable (e.g., Langston Hughes "Salvation") but could be easily found elsewhere on the Internet by an instructor or student. Sometimes I was prompted to log in, but I didn't, and I managed to navigate the whole site/text except for the online community assignment in each module.
- Though there is no top nor left menu, it's simple to go back to the homepage and find where you want to be based on the clear table of contents there; individual pages have "previous" and "next" tabs at the bottom, as well.

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?	X	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)

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?

- The text is quite useful as a stream-lined, user friendly text that outlines key points without going in-depth. The e-book is geared toward instructors in that it provides learning outcomes, small assignments (summary and annotation), essay prompts, and rubrics for every assignment. I appreciate that the text addresses word choice by providing a table of useful phrases for each type of essay though I wish there was some instruction on accurate usage concerning collocations, syntax, and grammar -- for example with subordinators such as "Although." The annotated student argument essay is a gem in that it stands as a model with comments as to why.

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

- This e-book appears to me like a classic outcome-based education text that is clear and concise but lifeless. Nonetheless, the outside readings (by well-known authors) are diverse and engaging. Many instructors would have to create their own rubrics or modify these, at least. For instance, the narrative rubrics assign 0 points to word choice, sentence fluency, or grammatical/mechanical conventions though later ones do attribute 10%. Information on the research process--scholarly articles are not even

mentioned, as well as the teaching of oral presentation skills, online publishing, and multi-modal presentation tools would have to be supplemented as well.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)
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