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:

MUSC 105 - Music Appreciation

License:

Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Authors:

Dr. David G. Such

Reviewed by:

Elizabeth Waterbury

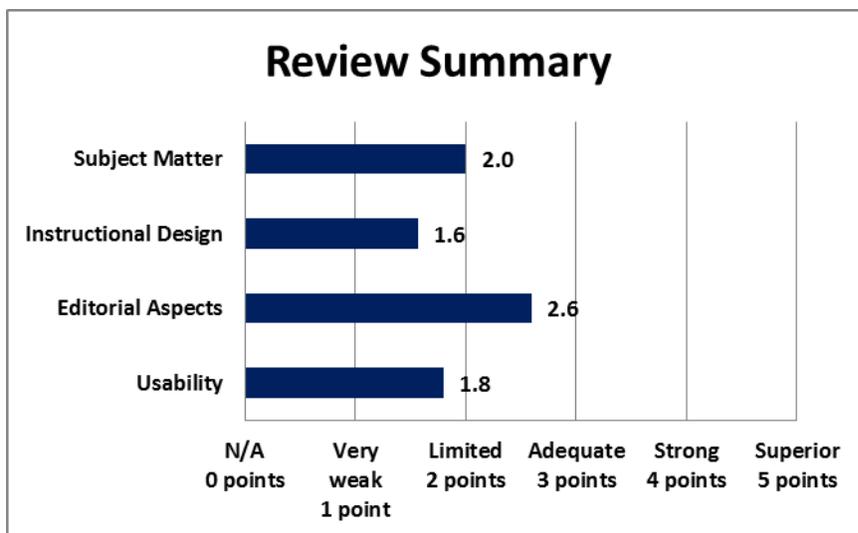Institution:

Shasta College

Title/Position:

Professor

Format Reviewed:

Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Review Summary

Subject Matter	2.0
Instructional Design	1.6
Editorial Aspects	2.6
Usability	1.8

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, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)					X	

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

- The text as it presents is not useful as an online textbook. The arrangement of material is a mix of multicultural, historical, and animal communication. This creates a piecemeal, inconsistent narrative that fails to create any educational momentum. However, some of the individual units are well developed. The critical thinking and group projects are particularly good.   The level of language is barely collegiate. Some would call that user-friendly, especially for ESL students.   However, it doesn't compare favorably with mainstream text books available for purchase.
- There are no images, graphs, or other embedded visuals.
- There are no test banks, but there are some pages of multiple-choice questions at the end of a few modules (not all). Some of the testing is designed to be used with the home LMS, Angel. I couldn't access it.

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: 11 out of 35

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

- Visuals are lacking.   Few art works. This is a stark contrast with commercially available Appreciation text books.
- When viewing the course on Google docs, the internal labels and markers didn't translate. This meant that every page was randomly presented inside of each module. To be fair to the author, this is probably not the case when viewed in Angel.
- I didn't find a table of contents, and it was not possible to travel within the document using Google Docs.

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: 13 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- To be fair, some of the editorial aspects were simply unavailable. The text in the modules refers to ancillary texts and CDs not available to the online reader. Jazz episode, "Swing" not available as an embedded video.

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: 9 out of 25

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

- One can only assume that on the home campus the interface would be much more fluid.

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?

- Unusual integrations of diverse content might appeal to some, for example the use of animal sounds to study the physics of sounds.
- Individual modules or pages on his personal interests and background are very enriching. He brings his own valuable ethnomusicological background to the course.
- Some use of CCM (contemporary commercial music) always helps students to connect to deeper course content.

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

- Overall, the approach is too scattershot, and piecemeal in the learning objectives. The course needs a clearer learning trajectory, so that the content builds on itself more effectively. That might mean deepening the historical content, and laying out the elements of music in a way that helps the student understand how music is organized. To put it simply, if we could save the goodies (bird sounds, Andean flute music) and have a leaner better organized basic content this might work. We need more visuals: art work, for example.

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