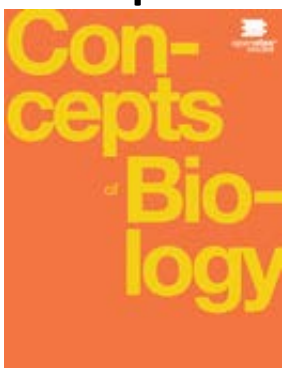
Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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:

Concepts of Biology



Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Authors:

Samantha Fowler, Clayton State University
Rebecca Roush, Sandhills Community College
James Wise, Hampton University

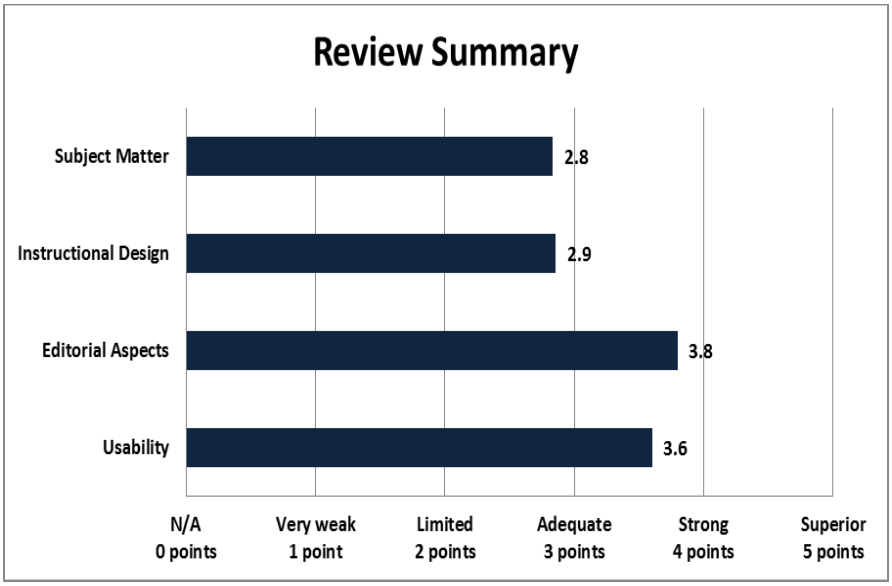
Reviewed by:
Roxann Schroeder

Institution:
Humboldt State University, CA

Title/Position:
Professor

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

Date Reviewed:
October, 2014



California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: BIO 110B

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: 17 out of 30

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

- Because this book is really a general intro to biology, there is a lot of the information needed for a human anatomy course, but there is more information about general anatomy (it would be very useful for a comparative anatomy course). There are human anatomy examples for all of the topics needed, but because there are also examples from other types of organisms, the detail might not be as deep as some instructors want.

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: 20 out of 35

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

- There are QR codes, as well as URLs, that take students to outside materials (videos, animations, even interactive "labs" that are helpful and support the text.

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: 18 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- This book uses both QR codes and URLs to take students out to supplemental information (videos, animations, even interactive "labs") that nicely supplement the material in the text.

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: 17 out of 30

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

- I downloaded a pdf version of the book, and was able to search, annotate and even edit it with Adobe Acrobat Pro - I am not sure how easy these tasks would be for a student using Adobe Reader.

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		

Overall Comments

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

- I am using this book this semester for Intro Bio, not human physiology. I am confident that much, if not all, of the material needed is in the book, but it is spread out in different sections of the book. The chapters that contain the "physiology" of organisms also contains lots of anatomy (which would be an advantage in an A&P course, but might be distracting for some physiology courses?).
- In addition, there is information about all organisms, not just humans (although there are examples from humans for all topics discussed).

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

- For a strictly human physiology course, there might be too much distraction with the examples of other organisms in the chapters. It would be interesting if the instructor could combine the different sections relevant to humans in one section.

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