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 no/low cost 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:

Public Speaking: The Virtual Text

License:

Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Author:

Lisa Schreiber, Project Director

Reviewed by:

Leslie Collins

Institution:

Modesto Junior College
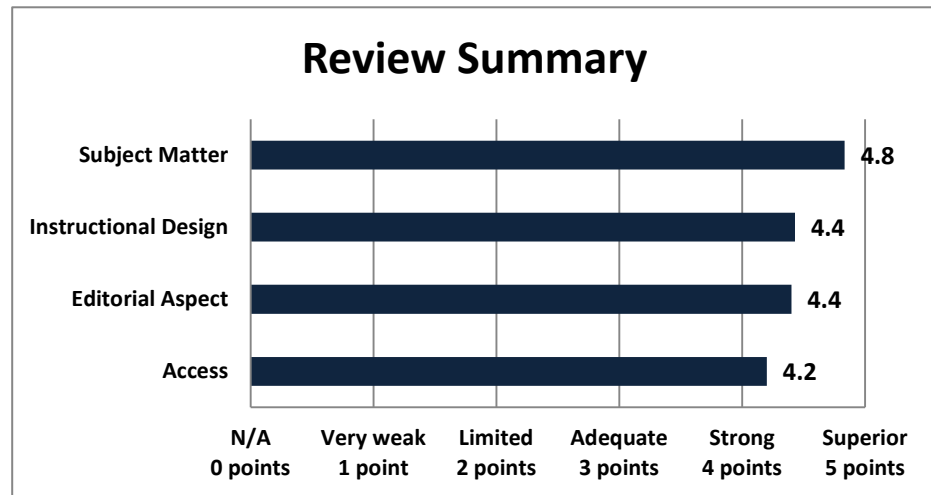
Title/Position:

Professor, Communication Studies

Format Reviewed:

Online and PDF

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

August, 2014

Review Summary

Category	Score
Subject Matter	4.8
Instructional Design	4.4
Editorial Aspect	4.4
Access	4.2

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

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: COMM 110

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

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						

Total Points: 29 out of 30

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

This crowd-sourced virtual textbook boasts both depth and breadth. All the key elements of public speaking are covered in the stand-alone modules, and the visual layout offers a sense of consistency between modules.

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: 31 out of 35 points

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

The textbook itself appeals to students who learn well through reading, and the images add interest and reinforcement. The ancillary videos benefit students who learn best through multimedia resources, and the forthcoming practice quizzes should help these students even more. The content is clearly organized into stand-alone modules, and the organization within each module (think "chapter") is designated on the first page. Making the chapter outline clickable would increase functionality and interactivity, but it's not vital.

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: 22 out of 25

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

While the multimedia elements are not embedded in the textbook, they are available on the Public Speaking Project's website. The layout uses a newsletter design, which looks a bit crowded at times but nicely breaks up the text into manageable chunks. Quotes, images, and text boxes also reinforce content and break up chunks of large text.

Access (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		

						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: 21 out of 30

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

These .pdf chapters should be easily accessible from campus computer labs. However, I'm not sure how accessibility software reads the newsletter format of a .pdf like this one. ADA compliance of the layout would need to be investigated. If instructors/students save a copy of the .pdf to their own device, they should be able to highlight/add notes to that copy.

Overall Ratings (10 possible points)	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?
- Rich, crowd-sourced content in downloadable .pdf learning modules.
- Supplemental resources like videos, web links, and practice quizzes (coming soon) to help students engage with the material.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?
- If I wasn't satisfied with my current solution (and if I hadn't recently switched to that solution) I would seriously consider adopting this textbook.
- No changes would be needed.
  This is a very impressive resource!

We invite 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