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:

College Algebra

License:
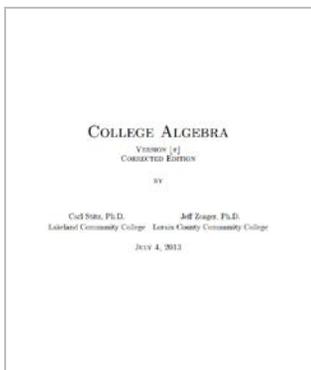
Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Authors:

Carl Stitz and Jeff Zeager

Reviewed by:

Robert Knight

Institution:

California State University, San Jose

Title/Position:

Professor

Format Reviewed:

Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

May 2016

Review Summary

Category	Score
Subject Matter	4.0
Instructional Design	3.1
Editorial Aspects	3.6
Usability	1.8

N/A 0 points | Very weak 1 point | Limited 2 points | Adequate 3 points | Strong 4 points | Superior 5 points
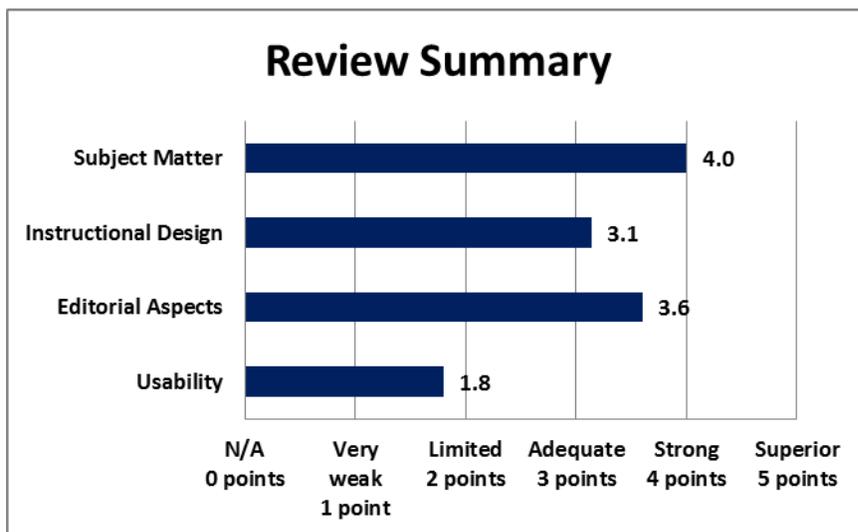
California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: MATH 151

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

	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
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:

- I think this text is a very good resource for four year college students with fairly significant mathematical aptitude. However, students with weak math skills will probably find this text somewhat difficult.
- The text has a very adequate number of supporting images, graphs and examples.
- There is also a very substantial amount of homework exercises with answers.

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: 22 out of 35

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

- I tried using the searchable glossary in the back of the text and none of the page links that were supposed to take me to the requested topic worked. I had to scroll through the text in order to get to the desired page/s.
- There are no Java applets or other "cool" instructional aids found in many textbooks today.

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.

- I did not find any use of multimedia tools anywhere in this textbook. I think that this text could be significantly enhanced by including such learning aids.

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.

- This textbook is essentially a plain text with very nice graphs.
- The table of contents works well to bring the reader to the specific chapter or topic desired.
- The glossary links do not work.
- There really is no use of Java applets or other multimedia enhancements.
- I am quite sure that the text could be read by a screen reader for blind students. I do not know about the graphs being read.

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: 6 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- I think this is a good textbook for a class of strong math students. I do not think it would be the best choice for a truly remedial class of weak or "mathematically challenged" students.

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

- This book would need more multimedia learning aids, Java applets and other such enhancements.
- The text itself would be better if used in a "review algebra course" aimed at "STEM" majors with adequate mathematical abilities.

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.