

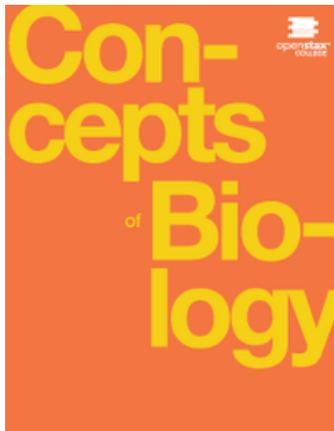


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) 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:

Concepts of Biology



License:



Concepts of Biology by Samantha Fowler, Rebecca Roush, and James Wise is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Authors:

Samantha Fowler, Rebecca Roush, and James Wise

Reviewed by:

David Stronck

Institution:

University of California, East Bay

Title/Position:

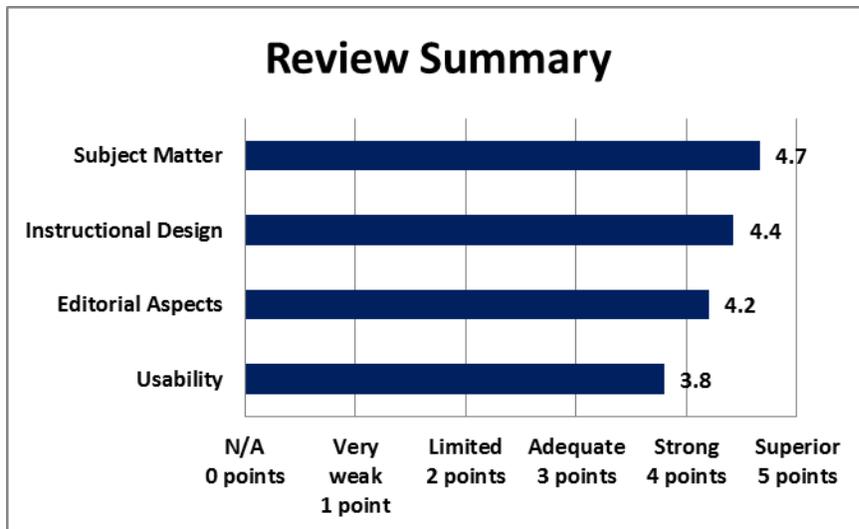
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



Date Reviewed:

August 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: no C-ID

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: 28 out of 30

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

- The book does an excellent detailed and consistent presentation of evolution.
- On page 309, the book well explains: "Endosymbiosis . . . eukaryotes are a product of one prokaryotic cell engulfing another. . . This once-revolutionary hypothesis . . . is now widely accepted." Please include endosymbiosis as a mechanism of evolution in the chapter about evolution and Darwin. The chapter seems to limit the mechanisms of evolution to natural selection, mutation, genetic drift and gene flow.
- The book is excellent in providing images, test banks, etc.

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

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

- The book's reading level is appropriate although the information is provided with the intensity of a summary of notes. The content requires slow reading and is not easily digested.

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: 21 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- The textbook is dense, i.e., packs much information and definitions into a relatively small number of words.
- The textbook covers most topics with more details than may be needed; the instructor has the

opportunity to be selective in assigning only parts of a chapter.

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: 19 out of 25

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

- This textbook was well supported by grants from three major foundations to Rice University. It is very professional and complete and current. For example, the textbook includes an excellent chapter about biotechnology.
- From the beginning the textbook explains evolution and involves evolution throughout the book. The textbook includes teaching evolution in the public schools that are assisted by the National Center for Science Education.

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?	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
						X

Total Points: 10 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- The textbook strongly emphasizes evolution. It is very complete and current. For example, on page 213, the textbook observes that Elizabeth Blackburn became a Nobel Laureate in 2009 for her discovery of how telomerase works. The textbook at length defines life, science, and other important concepts. The textbook includes details about the needs for biological diversity and current problems of the rapid extinction of species.

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

- Discussion of human diseases is scattered in many chapters. Some statements about finding other types of diseases in different chapters would help the reader to avoid confusion over viewing the topic as limited to the sources of diseases in one chapter.
- Hormones are well presented in one chapter although it omits most of the sexual hormones described in another later chapter. Again some explanation could avoid confusion over the complete list of hormones, divided between two chapters.

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.)



For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



This [review](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).