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:

Art History
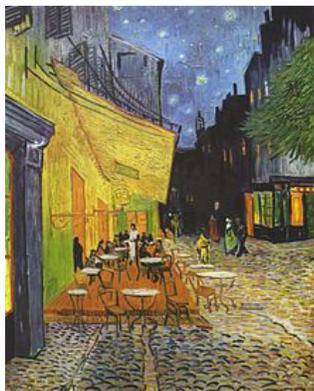
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Reviewed by:
Marla Burg

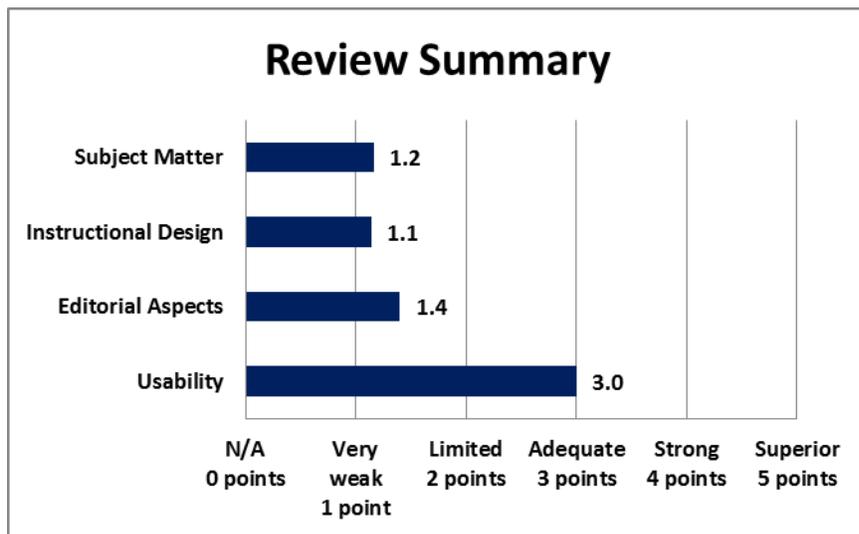Institution:
Ventura College

Title/Position:
Professor

Format Reviewed:
Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:
August 2015

Review Summary

Category	Score
Subject Matter	1.2
Instructional Design	1.1
Editorial Aspects	1.4
Usability	3.0

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: ARTH 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				

	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	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: 7 out of 30

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

- The text reads like class notes of an undergraduate half asleep in a first survey course. Actually it was crowd sourced, which explains the otherwise inexplicable sections such as the "Notes" following the Egyptian section that mention Matthew 10:16, Rumi, the so-called Templar mysteries, a world music dance band and Joseph Campbell, without a shred of context, example or illustration.
- Speaking of illustrations, where are they? For a text on the subject of Art, did no one find it necessary to include images? I believe the section on Gothic contained less than half a page, mentioned 3 cathedrals, and had not one image to illustrate the bare bone basics of flying buttress, stained glass windows, or pointed arches.
- One needed only a cursory glance to find typos and glaring errors:
    - Paleolithic cave paintings: "...we could a semiotic effort to talk about the human soul. The 'reality' of all animal figures is very high grade."
    - Lacking a verb, an explanation of semiotics, and any kind of
    - Measurement for grades of Art, I would find this passage bewildering at best.
    - Renaissance: "The word "renaissance" means "rebirth" in Italian. Last time I checked, it was French. Quick google search reveals the Italian is "renascita". A small point, but did no one edit this?
    - Medieval: "Iconoclasts destroyed early pagan statues and religious objects during the reign of Constantine."
    - Never mind that Iconoclasm is generally viewed as the period between 726-843, when the power of icons became suspect under Byzantine rule.
- I could go on, but what's the point? I hope no one is seriously considering using this resource as a legitimate textbook for a college class.

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: 8 out of 35

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

- I pray that it doesn't get any worse than this.

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				

	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
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: 7 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- Crowd sourced, in the worst way.

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: 15 out of 25

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

- Not worth considering.

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: 1 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- It's free. But there are so many better free sources available, including Wikipedia, this is not worth looking at.

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

- Everything

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.