



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 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:

Biology



License:



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Authors:

Boundless

Reviewed by:

Wendy Riggs

Institution:

College of the Redwoods

Title/Position:

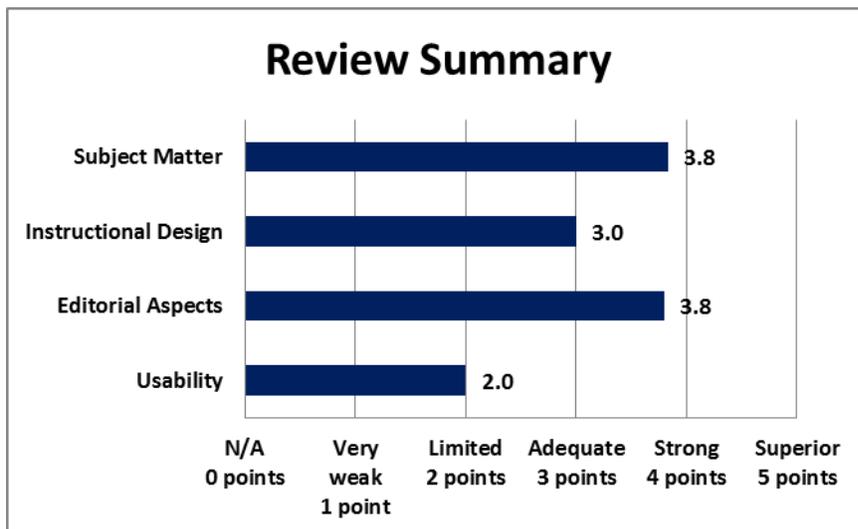
Professor

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: 23 out of 30

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

- The content is very detailed.
- It appears that the text is a combination of the OpenStax Biology text (which is a majors level biology book) and the OpenStax Concepts of Biology text (which is their non-majors version).
- There is definitely more depth in this resource than is needed in a non-majors biology course, but the modular presentation makes it possible to easily pick and choose the content to be included in your specific course. It might be overwhelming to sort through the 47 chapters and whittle it down to just the non-majors content. However, it appears that editing the text is very intuitive and easy.
- The images are nice and you can assign quizzes and concept readings. There is also the possibility of integrating the content with the LMS Canvas, which makes it even more seamlessly accessible to students.

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: 21 out of 35

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

- The font is pretty big and it doesn't look like there is a printable version of the textbook.
- It doesn't seem to come in many formats, which means students must be online to access the text. However, there is an abundance of supportive resources, like quizzes, assignments, and PowerPoint slides.
- Each chapter contains several sections, and each section contains several pages. I would like to be able to see all the sections in the table of contents. As it is, I have to click on the chapter in order to see the sections and the pages within those sections.
- It would be nice to have a collapsible set of links to let you navigate easier. Each specific page has at least one learning outcome, as well as a summary of key points, important terms, and definitions.

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: 19 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- The text is professional and is well written.
- The font is really big and so are the images, so it is tricky to see the pictures and the text at the same time. This makes for a less integrated reading experience, and I found myself just skipping over the images. It would be interesting to see if students did the same.
- At the bottom of each page, there are some quiz questions, though it is unclear if those are for students to answer...because they are awkwardly presented (there isn't any way to click on the answers, though if you click on the question, you are taken to a page where the answer is already indicated).
- There are also additional resources and references, which is really nice.

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: 10 out of 25

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

- I would like to have a collapsible table of contents that allowed me to access specific pages in the text from one central location.
- However, I like that you can read the text and then at the bottom, just click the "NEXT CONCEPT" button to travel directly to the next page.
- And unless I'm missing something, there is only one way to access this textbook (online). At the very least, there should be a printable PDF available for students to access offline. This seems like a very big oversight, which makes me think I might be missing something.
- I don't see a way to annotate the text, unless you are going to edit it, which seems very easy (there is an "edit" button in the right side menu on every page).

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: 5 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- There are a lot of resources to go with this text.
- It looks like it is easy to edit and customize, and it integrates with the LMS Canvas.

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

- I'd love to see a printable version of the text, especially if it can also be modified by individual instructors.
- I also think there should be offline access to the content, and I don't like how huge the type and images are.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)
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For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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