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:

Mi Vida Loca

License:
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Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Authors:
BBC Worlwide

Reviewed by:
Veronica Anover

Institution:
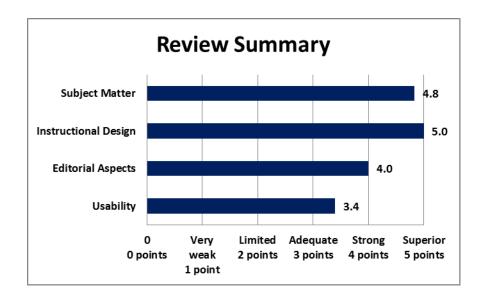California State University, San Marcos

Title/Position:
Professor

Format Reviewed:
Online
A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:
March 2015

Review Summary

Category	Score
Subject Matter	4.8
Instructional Design	5.0
Editorial Aspects	4.0
Usability	3.4

0 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: SPAN 100

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

	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
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: 29 out of 30

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

- Mi Vida Loca is an extremely interactive and engaging video program from the BBC that has been filmed in Spain, mainly in Madrid. The degree of depth for this beginner course is excellent. The program contains a "live" Phrase Book ("live" because the vocabulary is presented by a narrator who can be seen as he talks about the new lexicon); there are also grammar explanations that are clear and tight with the video segment; there also practice activities quite varied and interactive. English translations are available - as needed - for every component of the program.

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: 35 out of 35

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

- The instructional design is excellent. Easy to navigate and well-organized. The video segment are short (10-15 minutes) and contain many different features: Spanish captions, English captions, English translations, activities and explanations. The narrator pauses the video to check student comprehension or to repeat a sentence that was uttered in a fast pace (more authentic pace). The narrator engages the learner asking him/her to participate in the dialogue or to carry on a task -such as paying a taxi driver by dragging with the mouse the correct bills into the extended palm of the driver!

- The most appealing feature is the fact that the learner is one of the characters of the video program. The learner helps move the story line along by participating actively. In fact the characters in the video talk to the learners expecting answers (video pauses to allow learners to answer). The narrators recycle the new material often by asking "Remember how to say...?"

- The goals for each video segment are clearly stated and the activities target the goals in an effective way. Students receive guidance on what to do next. Activities, scripts, translations may be printed and are available on pdf.

- There is a "shortcut" feature to go faster -without as many explanations- on the video segments.

- Before each new video segment a summary of the previous one is provided in English.

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

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

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- Provides up-to-date material (cultural as well as expressions used in today's language); the characters are authentic, animated and engaging. They talk to the learner as if they were in front of them. The learner is surprised continuously by the reactions of the characters and does not know what to expect next. It keeps the learner in his/her toes! (For example when a character appears all of a sudden and asks a question. The video pauses for students to respond).

- There is a user guide as well as a table of content with the episodes, syllabus and print outs. The website provides related links as well as teaching tips.

- Important: The program although current has been archived and will no longer be updated.

Usability (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	
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: 17 out of 30

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

- Mi Vida Loca is on the BBC webpage and is easily accessed. Everything (video scripts, activities, explanations, etc.) may be printed and accessed on pdf format.

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: 9 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- The originality of the methodology: the fact that the students are one of the characters in the video program. Students cannot be passive and need to remain engaged in order to move along the story line. In fact, the video is filmed as if the student was holding the camera. Everything is seen under the student point of view.

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

- No improvement needed however the fact that this program is so interactive and requires the participation of each student it may be challenging to do in a classroom setting. It may be better to use it

in a language or computer lab where each student has access to a computer.

- Nonetheless there is always the option of assigning video segments to do at home and then in class review the new material and check comprehension. Excellent opportunity to do role plays as well (reenact scenes for example).

- Excellent supplementary material to go along with a first year Spanish textbook.

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.