



## 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](http://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:

### Writing for Success



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Textbook Author:  
Scott McLean

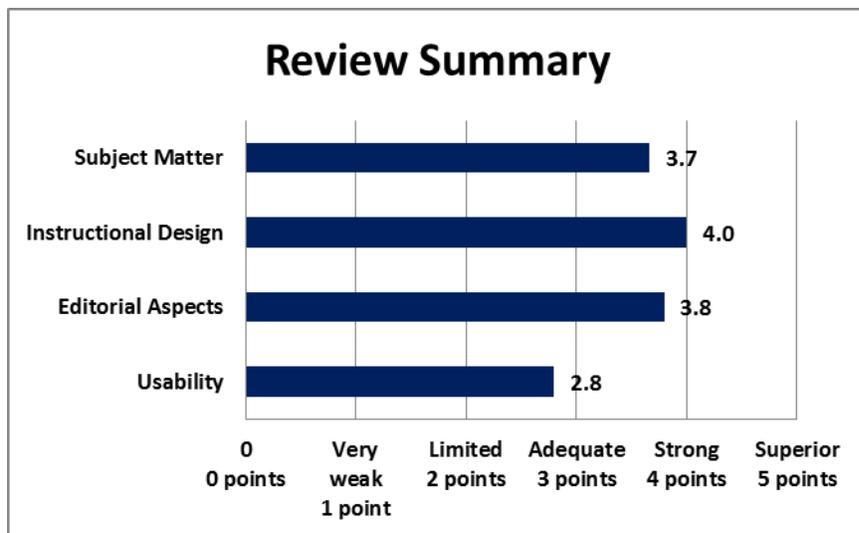
Reviewed by:  
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Format  
Reviewed:  
[Online](#)

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Date Reviewed:  
March 2015

### California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [ENGL 105](#)

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: 22 out of 30

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

- This resource is a well-constructed, approachable, and very clear, yet in some ways basic, introduction to writing at the college-level. Although the book adds a slightly rhetorical dimension to the classical modes, this organization still dominates the text; one result is less focus on argumentative writing, rhetoric, and critical thinking (although the implicit pedagogy of the apparatus is grounded in critical thinking). Supporting chapters – on studying, reading strategies, process, creating visuals and presentations, documenting research – are quite detailed and useful. However, most of the writing-based instruction may be too simplistic for some institutions/courses/students.

<b>Instructional Design (35 possible points)</b>	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: 28 out of 35

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

- The pedagogical apparatus and the number of engaging exercises are a distinct strength of the book. For my preferences/level of courses/students, the early chapters on sentence structure and basic grammar concepts are extraneous (or at very least should be moved to the end of the book instead of setting an expectation for students that may parallel their high school experiences).

<b>Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)</b>	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:

- A major issue is not being able to jump around easily in the textbook; the resource also lacks a TOC, a particular hindrance given the length (over 600 pages). Charts, tables, and other static visuals are useful and well-designed; however the book does not make use of interactive multimedia.

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: 14 out of 30

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

- Ease of use would be greatly improved by the option of reading online instead of as a pdf, making it easier to jump between chapters/exercises and link to outside references, as well as to make possible more intuitive navigation.

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: 5 out of 10

## Overall Comments

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

- This book has an approachable tone and many pedagogical exercises that put students to work on core concepts, sample student writing, and reading/writing/research strategies. There is ample grammar and syntax support in this book, as well as significant citation and formatting support; in my opinion the book's emphasis and the chapter order of these features position the resource as better suited for pre-transfer level writing courses or courses with a multilingual student population who could benefit from increased language support.

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

- Although the style and tone are clear and engaging, this resource may be pitched too low for composition courses at four-year institutions. Although some tips, strategies, explanations, or rationale will be helpful for students, when it comes to writing instruction they will find well-written but (too) familiar and generalized advice about constructing five-paragraph essays, repeating their introduction in their conclusion, and the like – content only slightly elevated, if at all, from their high school educations.

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](#).



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