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.
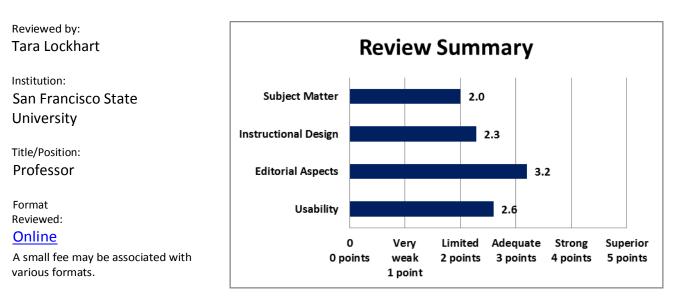
Textbook Name:

English Composition

lumen

License:

Find it: eTextbook Website

Textbook Author:

Lumen Learning

Reviewed by:

Tara Lockhart

Institution:

San Francisco State University

Title/Position:

Professor

Format Reviewed:

Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Review Summary

Category	Score
Subject Matter	2.0
Instructional Design	2.3
Editorial Aspects	3.2
Usability	2.6

Scale: 0 (0 points), Very weak (1 point), Limited (2 points), Adequate (3 points), Strong (4 points), Superior (5 points)

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				X		

offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						

Total Points: 12 out of 30

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

- Uses a basic modes approach instead of a genre-based or rhetorical approach; in this way, oversimplifies writing situations, minimizes diverse purposes for writing, and offers generalized advice about writing ("grab your reader," "use appropriate tone and style"). Argument module is underdeveloped; no information presented directly on critical thinking. Tone is perhaps too personal, over-reaching in ways that teachers may be uncomfortable with, or have trouble meshing with their own practices. For example, sentences like this, in addition to not providing enough reasoning/context for why this rule may pertain, seem to overstep the bounds of a textbook, in my opinion: " In fact, if I see any outside research in your personal essays, that will hurt your grade."

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: 16 out of 35

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

- Rubrics, as well as grammar and other exercises, appear throughout the text, although I did not find them particularly useful. The emphasis seems to be on embedding the structural aspects of the course instead of content. Text is searchable only on a given page. Feels more appropriate for a high school class than college-level, argumentative writing courses.

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 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: 16 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- Some multimedia elements are more effective than other (e.g., helpful webpage on writing processes, inappropriate (topic, length) interview with Ann Lamott, promotional video for a netiquette site that doesn't exist). Other elements are not up to date (e.g. "commonly occurring grammar mistakes" does not link to page). Navigation is basic – main TOC with hyperlinks and next/previous page arrows.

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: 13 out of 25

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

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: 3 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- Would not recommend.

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

- Content should be more up to date with current research in composition (specifically, a modes-based approach is significantly out of date), as well as more in line with argumentative writing/critical thinking course goals.

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.