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:

Introduction to Physical Geography

Find it: eTextbook Website

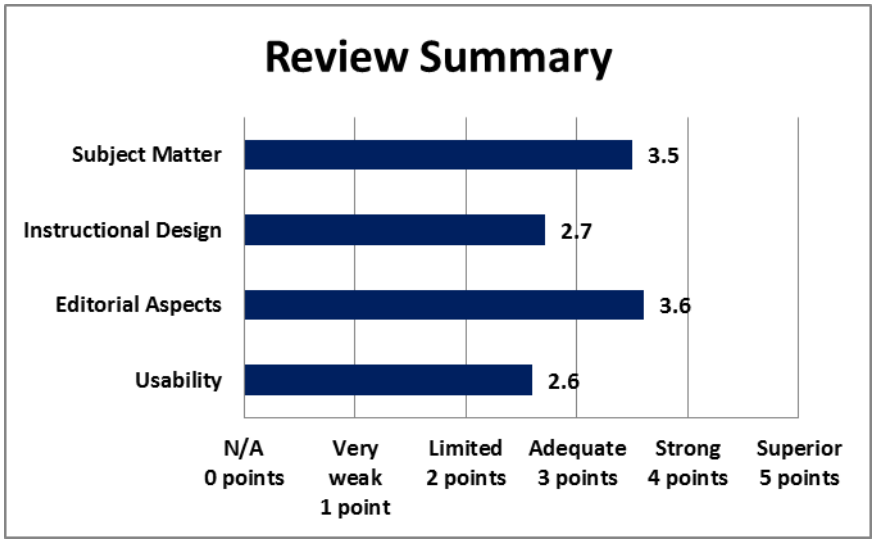
Textbook Authors:
R. Adam Dustrup

Reviewed by:
Stephen Cunha

Institution:
California State University, Humboldt

Title/Position:
Professor

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



Date Reviewed:
December 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: GEOG 115

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,	X					

ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						

Total Points: 21 out of 30

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

- The content is comprehensive and well written. The reading level is appropriate for college freshman, but English learners will be challenged by some of the longer explanations.

- The many visuals bring the subject to life, but most are presented without captions, and some images and art are not precise examples of the text. There is a wealth of animations and YouTube videos that complement the text. Most of these are excellent and professionally produced by CNN, NGS, USGS, etc. Some portray examples of recent phenomena presented in the text (e.g., earthquakes, mudflows).

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: 19 out of 35

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

- The book is not searchable, and vocabulary is not hyperlinked to definitions. There are no chapter reviews or questions, although some chapters do conclude with a good summary paragraph.

- Each chapter does begin with a set of helpful goals and objectives.

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: 18 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- Of the 14 chapters, two are not completed.

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.

- One of the strengths of this book--the many animations--will not be accessible to many users when the chapters are downloaded.

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: 7 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- This is a good text for online use only, as the many imbedded professional animations (by NGS, USGS, CNN, etc.) will not download. Note that the final two chapters (Ecosystems and Biomes, and Human Impacts) cannot be accessed at this time. The writing is readable and comprehensive, and the supporting images complement the text, in most cases. However, most figures lack specific titles and captions, and thus callouts within the text.

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

- Completing the final two chapters, and adding captions to the figures, with callouts in the text.

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.)

CALIFORNIA OER COUNCIL
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For questions or more information, contact the CA Open Educational Resources Council.