

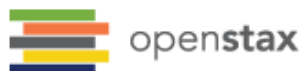


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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:

Introduction to Psychology



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Textbook Authors:

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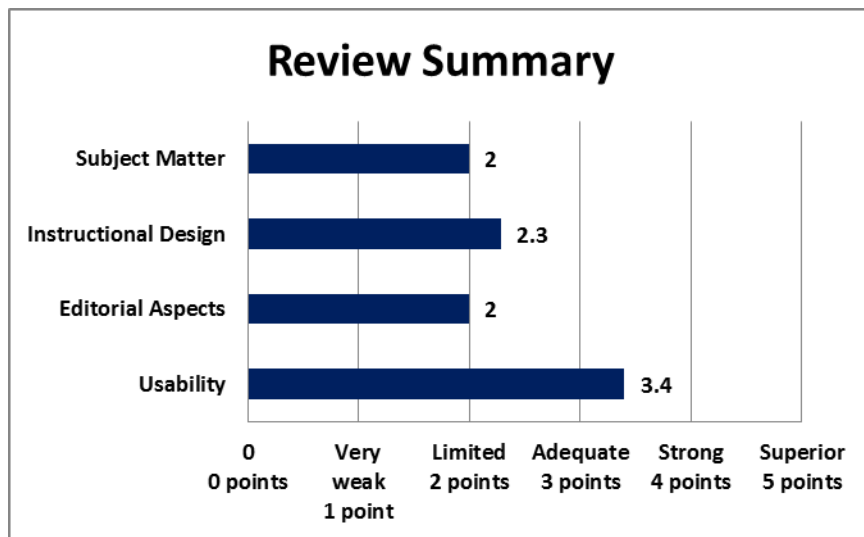
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



Date Reviewed:

March 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [PSYCH 110](#)

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				
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Total Points: 12 out of 30

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

- The text includes features designed to enhance student engagement such as “Everyday Connection”, which applies the target concepts to contemporary situations that are relatable to students. There is a feature called “What do you think?” that highlights ethical and controversial issues in psychology. There is a section titled “Dig Deeper” which similarly addresses concepts as they relate to students’ lives. The text also reports using a “Connect the Concepts” section that relates content between chapters to provide a larger theme for the book.
- The aforementioned features are theoretically strong aspects of a book, however, they are not consistently implemented and do not deliver as strong an impact as they could.
- The strongest feature of the text is the “Link to Learning” which directs students to free activities on the web that are interactive, exciting and personally relevant. These include a link to an abbreviated Myers Briggs personality test, a worksheet on defense mechanisms, and a questionnaire assessing Locus of Control. These types of exercises truly gain student attention and enhance engagement. While this feature is effective in most cases, there are problems/errors throughout. For example, the link to the video on Carl Rogers leads to a page marked “private” such that the video is not accessible. In Chapter 1 there is a link that leads to “an article to read” which actually leads to a video with no accompanying text. There are also errors in the content of the links as described later in my review.
- There are some notable omissions from the text. For example, the chapter that includes a discussion of behaviorism omits Watson and Pavlov. In addition, that chapter also leaves out Bandura and his Bobo Clown study which is a seminal work in psychology. There is a Link to Learning that includes a colorful summary of Adler’s views on birth order. The graphics only highlight the positive outcome for first born children without mention that from Adler’s perspective first-borns are also the most likely children to have psychological problems. There is a table summarizing Freud’s psychosexual stages of development, which leaves out a lot of important information, and the omission actually suggests some inaccurate information. For example, in the column listing maladaptive responses to stages, “none” is listed for both the latency and genital stages. This is inaccurate as failure to successfully navigate both of these phases leads to adverse outcomes. Another notable omission from the text is that Erikson’s stages of development are only mentioned briefly in a table that itself is incomplete.
- There are errors throughout the book that convey inaccurate or misleading information. For example, the definition of counseling psychology states that it is an area of psychology that “focuses on....individuals who are considered psychologically healthy.” When comparing the training for clinical and counseling psychologists, the latter are not typically trained to diagnose and treat as severely affected patients as the former. However, counseling psychologists treat people who have problems and who frequently have one or more psychological disorders. The text’s discussion of counseling psychology does not include a comparison to clinical psychology, and therefore the definition is not only wrong but even more misleading than it would be if such a comparison was made.
- Another notable error is within the history of psychology section. There is a large subtitle “Wundt and Structuralism” which is followed by a discussion of Wilhelm Wundt and his school of psychology called “structuralism”. Wundt’s school of psychology is actually called “voluntarism.” Structuralism was developed by Titchener and grew out of Titchener’s criticism of voluntarism.
- As mentioned in another section of this book review, the writing of the text needs a lot of editing. There is a highlighted section of the book that addresses the relative dearth of female psychologists and multicultural considerations in psychology. While this is certainly true, the manner that the book handles these topics presents psychology in a very negative light and minimizes the field’s current efforts to be

sensitive to women and other cultures. Constructive criticism is necessary for growth of any discipline and the overall claims that the text makes are accurate. However, the presentation actually turns one away from psychology and does not highlight that current perspectives include both a recognition of these past limitations and strong efforts to make improvements.

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:

- The overall visual presentation of the book is just adequate. More interesting and visually appealing graphics and organization could be used to engage the reader.
- Chapters do not include learning outcomes or objectives. There is no overall purpose stated for each chapter, nor is there a clearly bulleted summary of main points at the end of each section.
- The text includes a glossary at the end of every section which is a good organizational and learning tool. However, many times the definitions are overly brief and somewhat nontraditional. For example, the definition of “behaviorism” states “focus on observing and controlling behavior.” A more commonly used definition is “A school of psychology that confines itself to the study of observable and quantifiable aspects of behavior and excludes subjective phenomena, such as emotions or motives.”
- The text includes review questions at the end of every section. There are both multiple choice items and critical thinking queries. This is another area where the text sometimes falls short. For example, there is only one multiple choice question for the Neo-Freudians section.

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: 10 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- The text needs editing throughout both with respect to accurate content but also with respect to the writing itself, which is often awkward and confusing particularly for readers who have no background in psychology. Throughout the entire book, sentences are long and include multiple commas and dangling phrases. For example, the text handles the definition of hysteria as follows: “Hysteria was an ancient diagnosis for disorders, primarily of women with a wide variety of symptoms including physical symptoms

and emotional disturbances, none of which had an apparent physical cause.” In the very first chapter the introduction to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs includes the statement: “Humanistic psychologists rejected, on principle, the research approach based on reductionist experimentation in the tradition of the physical and biological sciences, because it missed the “whole” human being.” This writing style is confusing and will frustrate readers making them less likely to engage with the text. The majority of the text is written in this manner.

- While the text incorporates figures, many of them are simply photos of people rather than figures and tables that actually explain and clarify concepts. The text is therefore weak with respect to addressing the needs of visual learners. The text adequately addresses the needs of kinesthetic learners - who benefit from trial and error learning, examples, test items, and applications of concepts - by incorporating quiz items and critical thinking questions.

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.

- The text is available in pdf format and for viewing on the web. The navigation is relatively simple. The text offers instructors the ability to add content via a web link. There is a nice question and answer feature on the side of the book that allows students to email the publisher with queries.

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: 2 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- The book has some great content features that enhance student engagement. The book includes end of section multiple choice items and critical thinking questions.

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

- The book needs a lot of editing both with content and writing. As mentioned previously, there are a significant number of errors throughout the text. I highlighted multiple errors within only a couple of chapters alone. The language of the text is unnecessarily complicated and will serve not only to confuse readers but to discourage students from actually reading the book.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)
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