



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 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:

Boundless: Art History



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Authors:

Boundless

Reviewed by:

Alice Taylor

Institution:

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Title/Position:

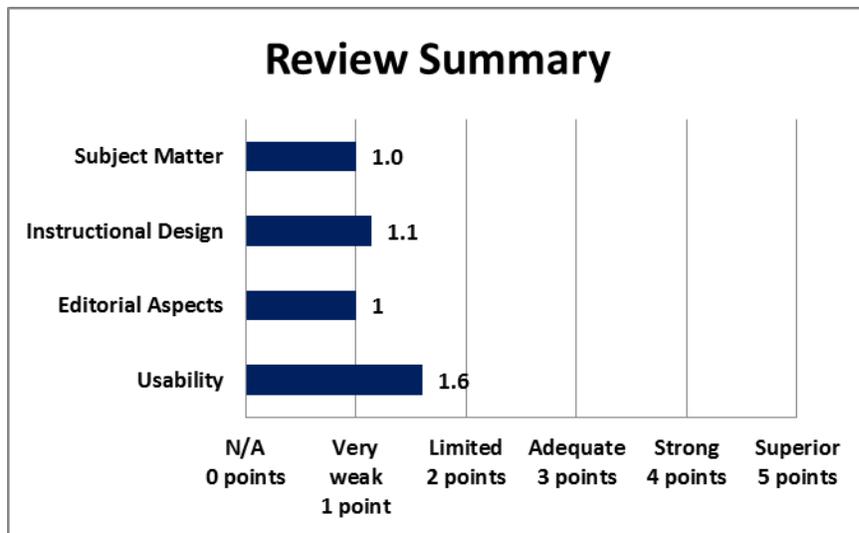
Professor

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: [ARTH 120](#)

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: 6 out of 30

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

- Appears to have been compiled by amateurs. References are to Wikipedia. There is almost no analysis; students seem to be expected to accept the generalizations offered without any supporting evidence, or even of images of art that "is considered to be" very important. Major factual errors abound.

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: 8 out of 35

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

- The organization is haphazard. Tables of Contents keyed to major textbooks in the field are provided, but the content is garbled. (Examples: in following Stokstad's decision to place Northern Renaissance before the Italian Renaissance, Boundless leaves the student to figure out what is meant by humanism in this context, before the term is introduced. The role of the artist inserted in the Renaissance section turns out to deal almost exclusively with contemporary artists.) There are SLOs, but they don't align with C-ID Arth 120, and the materials to meet 120's SLOs are absent.

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: 5 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- Key terms are linked to definitions which seem to be shared across the fields Boundless seeks to serve, resulting in some very confusing references, as when a reference to perspectives on an issue is linked to the definition of perspective in painting.

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: 8 out of 30

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

- Buttons that guide one to next concept follow the often illogical structure of the Tables of Contents, leading student far from the intended topic.

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?	X	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)

Total Points: 1 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- It is free online, but I'd still stay clear of it.
- It's not clear if students have to pay \$19.99 to have access to the version the instructor customizes for them.

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

- Just about everything--content is shallow, incorrect and disorganized.

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