

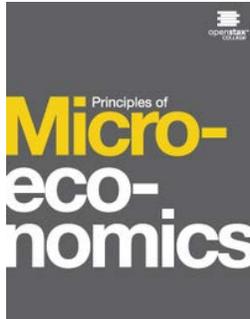


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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 no/low cost 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:

Principles of Microeconomics



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

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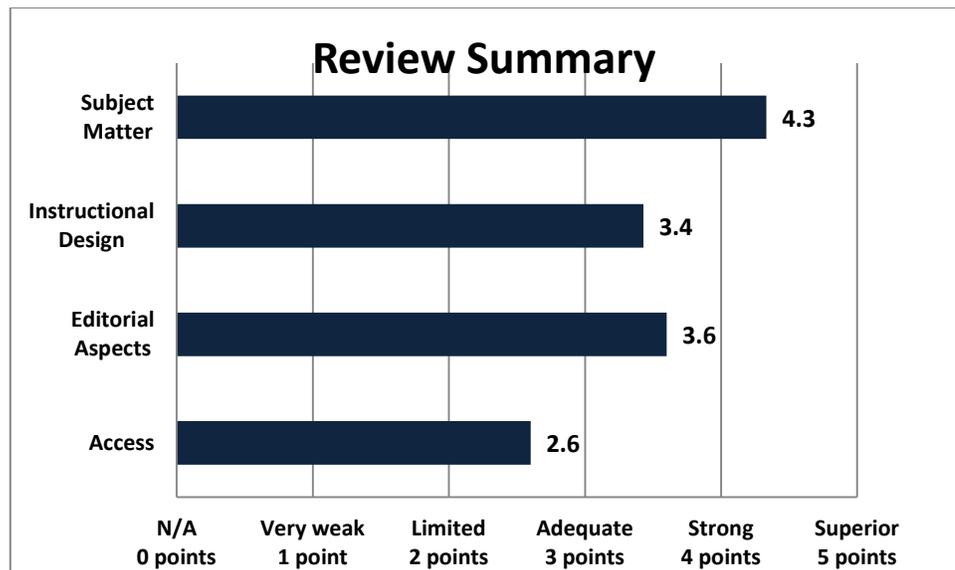
Format Reviewed:

[Online](#) and [PDF](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

August, 2014



California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [ECON 201](#)

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					X	

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						

Total Points: 26 out of 30

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

- Overall, it is well written, in a simple straightforward voice, not too wordy, for the most part.
- While the sequence of topics is fairly standard, I have mixed feelings about chapter 2 -- Choice in a World of Scarcity -- in which the applications pertain to the consumption decision, budget constraints, the labor-leisure decision and inter-temporal choice.
- On the one hand, I think some of the economics concepts in this chapter (such as budget constraint, inter-temporal choice, and diminishing marginal utility) are too challenging this early in the course.
- I would prefer to address these concepts later under "Household Decision Making."

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: 24 out of 35 points

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

- The new features (Bring it Home, Work it Out, Clear it Up, and Link it Up) stood out in the pdf format but not in the online format.
- "Bring It Home" as a chapter opener is an effective way to make Economics meaningful to students (they can readily see how economic concepts relate to real world events).
- With regards to the question of learning styles, there is no getting around the fact that there must be a combination of prose and diagrams to teach economics effectively

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: 18 out of 25

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

- There are not too many graphs and although the graphs are not colorful, I actually like the presentation of the graphs because they convey the impression that they are relatively easy to draw (not

intimidating --this is a plus for students).

- There are no animations or audios associated with this text that I am aware of..

Access (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: 13 out of 30

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

- I downloaded a pdf version and read some chapters online. The former is visually more appealing than the latter. The web version is mostly displayed in shades of grey. The 4 features "Bring It Home", etc. are not titled in the online version and therefore do not stand out.
- Going consecutively from one page to another is straight forward (in both formats) but trying to scroll back or forward to find something you read earlier is not that easy.
- The learning outcomes do not stand out -- the online format is not easy to read and I doubt it could engage students.
- On the question of annotation, I did not see any tools that will permit active reading such as highlighting, bookmarking and annotating. Of course, in the pdf format, if one is familiar with using Acrobat), it is possible to insert comment and sticky notes but even so, it might be difficult to retrieve these.
- Although I did not print the textbook, I imagine that it is not too difficult to print the pdf version (but it might be expensive in terms of paper usage), so I doubt students will print the textbook.

Overall Ratings (10 possible points)	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				

Overall Comments

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

- The affordability factor is important. I would also recommend the pdf version over the online version. In terms of subject matter, it covers the topics that must be covered in a principles course.
- The "Link It Up" feature includes interesting issues that will engage students and foster economic literacy because students can see how economics can be explained in a practical way.
- The writing style is lucid.

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

- It is not so much the textbook itself that I have reservations about; rather I'm still unsure that the e-text is a suitable replacement for the traditional textbook.
- Also, I did not get a chance to examine the instructor resources and other student resources. I know that Sapling Learning is used as the interactive homework platform, but I have not used this and have not reviewed it.

We invite your feedback on the textbook or the review to the [textbook site in MERLOT](#).
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For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#)



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