



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:

Microeconomics: Theory through Applications



Microeconomics: Theory Through Applications

License:



This text was adapted by The Saylor Foundation under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/) without attribution as requested by the work's original creator or licensee.

Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Author(s):

Russell Cooper and Andrew John

Reviewed by:

Ratha Ramoo

Institution:

Diablo Valley College

Title/Position:

Assistant Professor,
Department of
Economics

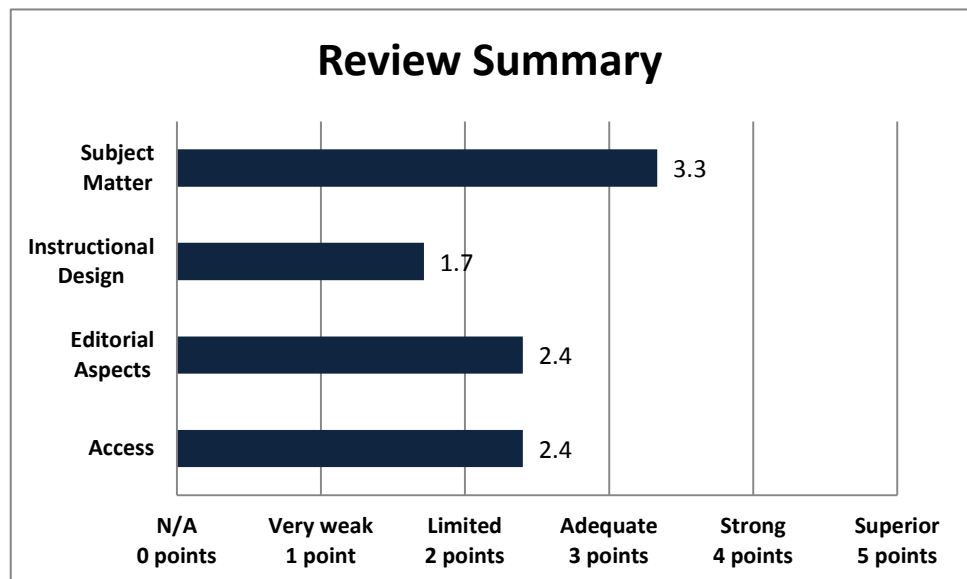
Format Reviewed:

[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 | | | | X | | |

| Subject Matter (30 possible points) | N/A (0 pts) | Very Weak (1pt) | Limited (2 pts) | Adequate (3pts) | Strong (4 pts) | Superior (5 pts) |
|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| 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?) | | | | | | |

Total Points: 20 out of 30

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

- There are some topics that are not typically covered in an introductory level course such as inter-temporal choice theory (Chapter 4), and Asset Pricing (Chapter 9).
- Their approach to the profit maximizing rule using markup pricing is also non-standard.
- There is also a lack of continuity of ideas and core concepts making it difficult to teach in a logical and cohesive manner. For example, marginal cost is covered in chapter 6 but other types of costs (total costs, fixed costs and variable costs) are discussed in chapter 8. Another example, individual demand is covered early on in chapter 2 (no mention of individual supply) but market demand and market supply are covered in chapter 5 and market equilibrium is covered in chapter 16.

| 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: 12 out of 35 points

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

- For some chapters a relatively long introductory segment precedes the Road Map (for example, Ch. 10, Raising the Wage Floor). I found this to be distracting. Since the purpose of the introductory segment is to provide real world context that would fascinate and convey interest, these goals might be lost if the section is too long.
- The Road Map in all chapters captures concisely what is to be covered in each chapter. Essentially, it tells students what economic ideas would be used to tackle the issues alluded to in the introductory segment.
- An exploration of the subject matter begins with learning objectives (a plus), but I would like to see a better alignment between the learning objectives and the content. For example, in Chapter 4 (which is a challenging chapter; I do not cover inter-temporal choice in an Introductory course), in section 4.1, there are 4 learning objectives, but these get lost in the lengthy discussion that follows. It would be more helpful to breakdown the discussion into smaller units, each revolving around a single learning objective.
- There are some economic terms that are boldfaced and some that are italicized. For the bold face terms, such as income effects and substitution effects, students may click on these terms to see their definitions. I would prefer that the definitions stay on the page in the margin. The italicized terms do not come with definitions.

| 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 | |

| 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 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: 12 out of 25

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

- As noted below, I could not find the TOC in the pdf document that I downloaded.
- The visual dimension of the text is quite minimal -- insufficient use of color, photos, and summary tables to aid retention. Although the graphs can be enlarged for clearer viewing, they open in a different window, making it impossible to read the text alongside the graph.
- Also absent: solved problems, summary tables to help reiterate the main ideas of the chapters and the core concepts used in the chapter; interactive elements such as video tutorials, especially in the tool kit chapter.

| 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: 12 out of 30

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

- I would like to comment on accessing the textbook online. As per the instructions provided I was taken to a page where I could download the book in pdf format. I could also access the book through FlatWorld. The pdf format is highly unsatisfactory. I could not find the table of contents anywhere in the pdf document I downloaded. This is very frustrating for both instructor and student alike. However, it was possible to view the Table of Contents (TOC) when I accessed the text through Flatworld but that would mean I would have to have internet access. Although I still had to scroll back and forth, say from the toolkit (placed at the end of the book) to something I am reading in Ch. 4, at least I could simply click on that section in the TOC.
- I also could not locate the Instructor Table of Contents which lists the theoretical concepts introduced in each chapter.
- I don't see the logic of having separate table of contents for instructors and students?
- Why should students not be exposed to the theoretical concepts alongside the practical applications, given that an important goal of an Economics course is to provide them with tools of analyses?
- At this point I am not sure what students see and what I (the instructor) see..

| 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 | | | |

| 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) |
|--|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 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?

- This book is more focused on economic literacy – applying some selected theories them to contemporary issues in the real world -- rather than on building a foundation of core theory on which to build the next level course in economics.
- As such this textbook is more appropriate for a Topics Course or an Economics for Non-majors course (although I suspect it might be at too high a level for non-majors).

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

- This is not a textbook I would use -- the fundamental concepts are "all over the place"; the transition from one concept to the next is not smooth and makes instructional scaffolding an almost impossible task.
- Community college students have a diverse range of skills and many of them require a lot of hand-holding. This textbook is not a good choice for me

We invite your feedback on the textbook or the review to the [textbook site in MERLOT](#).
(Please [register](#) in MERLOT to post your feedback.)



For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#)



This [review](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).