

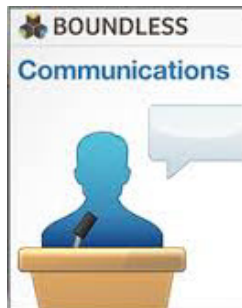


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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:

Communications



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Reviewed by:

Leslie Collins

Institution:

Modesto Junior College

Title/Position:

Professor,
Communication Studies

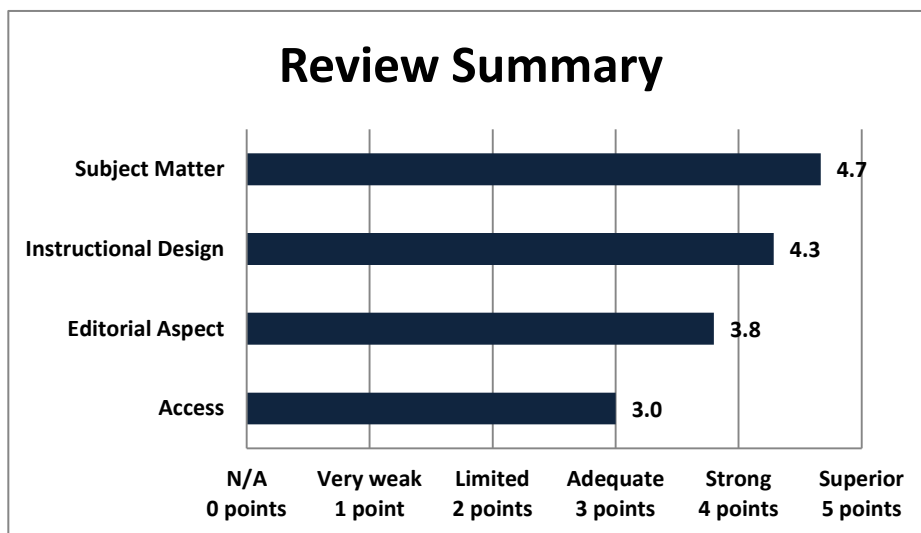
Format Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

August, 2014



California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [COMM 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

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

The crowd-sourced nature of this book creates a database of rich and relevant content for public speaking courses.

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: 30 out of 35 points

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

This is a very modern, cloud-based take on the idea of a textbook. Content is organized into readings with high interactivity (clickable links) and large, high-quality images. Less tech-savvy students may get lost if they click a vocabulary link and are taken away from the content, but more tech-savvy students should enjoy the interactive nature of the book. It would be nice to see some videos integrated into the content, but this is still a very strong resource as-is.

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: 23 out of 25

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

As mentioned previously, the images (and layout) of this book are very modern. Small chunks of information are given at a time, and users are encouraged to click through the readings to work through the content. Students would be well-served with integrated media content, too. For example, when the organization Toastmasters International is introduced, one of the Toastmasters YouTube videos could be integrated into the readings to clarify the organization. In the section "Sample Persuasive Speech," this is a great opportunity to use videos of the speeches, not just text pulled from their transcripts.

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: 15 out of 30

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

I know that students can download the Kindle or iBooks version of this book for \$9.99, but since the online content is always in flux, I'm not sure how closely the ebooks correlate to the online readings. This also makes printing the book a bit tricky, but to be fair, the major benefits from this book come from its cloud-based, interactive, online format. Boundless does not have built-in screen reading software, but they recommend students with visual disabilities use Clearly by Evernote to listen to the text. There is also a difference between the free books and the enhanced books with study tools (\$19.99 each), but the difference may be difficult for students to figure out (i.e., they may accidentally purchase the book when looking for the free version). This is reminiscent of Flat World Knowledge before they eradicated their free online options.

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?

- Boundless Communications offers an interactive, crowd-sourced, cloud-based learning resource for public speaking students.

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

- If I hadn't just switched my entire class to Stand Up, Speak Out last summer, I would seriously consider using this Boundless resource instead.
- My choice not to switch has nothing to do with the book itself, but rather with the amount of work that goes into switching textbooks.

The interactivity of this book is fantastic, and it's something that I think would keep my students engaged. The book would be improved by embedding media (like examples of speeches), but it's still a well-developed resource with lots of supplements.

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](#)



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