

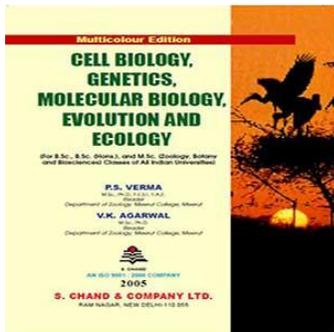


## Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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](http://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:

### Cell Biology, Genetics, Molecular Biology, Evolution and Ecology



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Format

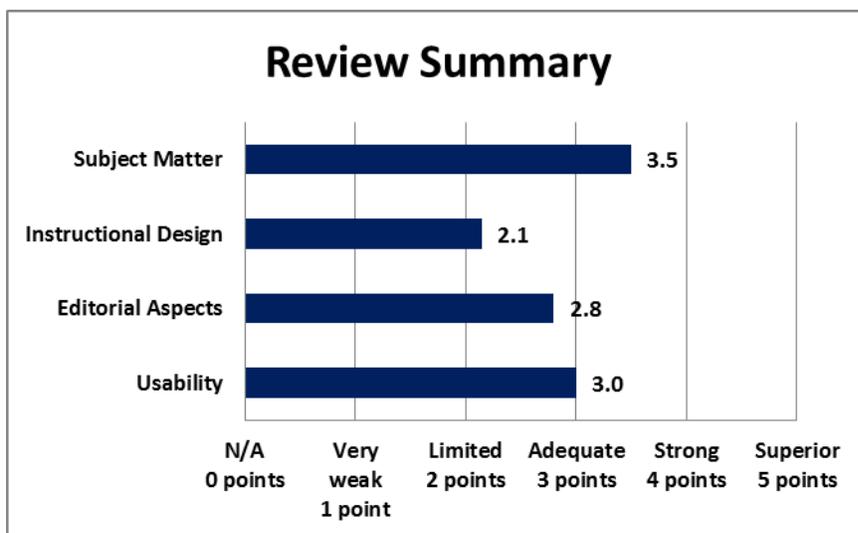
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Date Reviewed:

December 2015



### California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [BIOL 190](#)

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: 21 out of 30

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

- This text covers the standard material of cell biology, molecular biology and genetics, and is comparable in scope to the standard texts (e.g. Campbell) but the organization scheme is quite different. For example each cellular component has a separate chapter and cellular respiration is treated under mitochondria. The level of treatment is appropriate for majors but less in depth than many comparable texts. The last update of this text (which is the 14th edition and the first to be rendered in color) was apparently in 2004.
- As far as I can tell, there are no test banks or PowerPoint slides associated with this text.

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: 15 out of 35

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

- This book is a repository of factual information, but lacks adequate context and a strong critical thinking component.

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: 14 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- The book is well organized into chapters and sections and the scheme is comparable to standard biology texts within each major heading (cell biology, molecular biology, genetics).
- The writing is very dry and the emphasis is on enumerating facts rather than presenting a narrative. The text is thus information dense but lacks reflection or context and thus might not be engaging to all readers.
- The graphics are uniformly poor quality and nearly unusable.

Usability (25 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 25

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

- The layout is comparable in the PDF and the web based versions and is laid out exactly as a print text would be. There are "Contents" buttons on many pages, but they did not work for me.

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: 2 out of 10

## Overall Comments

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

- This text contains the basic information one would learn in a majors cell and molecular class, but has no amenities and is not very "user friendly".
- The graphics are all pixelated and blurry in PDF and web versions as well as the printable version. This fact alone renders the book of much lower value than if it had higher quality images and diagrams.

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

- Better art and images.
- This text should also be updated for content as the last update was apparently in 2004 or 2005. The book began publication in 1974 and is in its 14th edition.
- While the text would be adequate, there are other more aesthetically pleasant and textually engaging open educational resources to choose from.

We invite you to add 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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