

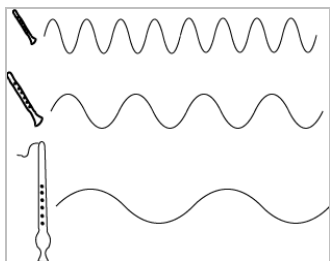


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

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 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:

Introduction to Music Theory



License:



Introduction to Music Theory by Catherine Schmidt-Jones is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Authors:

Catherine Schmidt-Jones

Reviewed by:

Zachary Matthews

Institution:

Pasadena City College

Title/Position:

Professor

Format

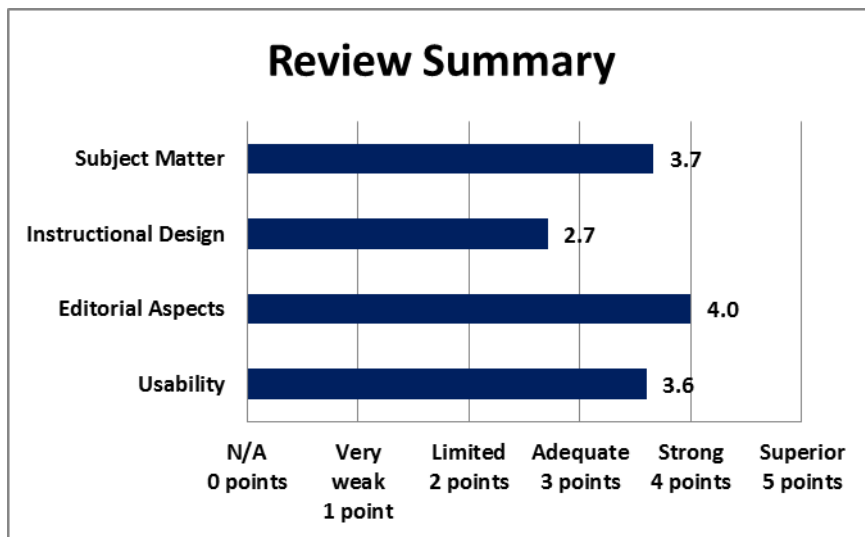
Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

December 2015



California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [MUS 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						X

offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total Points: 22 out of 30

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

- The absence of rhythm makes this incompatible as a singular Music Fundamentals course textbook relating to CID MUS 110.
- The section on ear training is merely a description of different ear training skills and a list of suggestions for each one. There is no organized ear training learning or material.
- While not required, this book does not include material that could be used as graded assignments. There are a number of exercises at the conclusion of each section, but those exercises are short and are presented with answers at the end of the chapter and online with the click of a button. This will be useful for self-learning but not effective for graded classroom work.
- It is my opinion that this material requires considerable practice to develop mastery, much more than these short exercises allow. The book exercises could be used for in-class and self-study work but would need to be augmented with separate worksheets for class homework assignments.

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: 19 out of 35

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

- I am concerned that the author regularly references information from future sections of the book as examples. These examples, having no current context for the student, don't serve well to illuminate the current material.
- There are some dead links (i.e. <http://openingmeasures.com>)
- There appear to be a few references to things that are not taught until later, e.g. in section 3.3 you are told to look for Cadences to tell if a key is in Major or Minor. Cadences are not explained until section 3.4. It is referenced, but this book forces a lot of jumping around, rather than a linear path through the material. Seventh Chords are not described until 3.6.3 but are referred to numerous times beforehand, including reference to the quality of a dominant seventh chord at a point where the student will not know what that means.

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: 20 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook:

- While some of the online listening examples are in an easy to use MP3 format, others are midi files which can be hard to work with and are not consistently effective on different computer systems. For example, when I clicked on them it opens a blank browser page, downloaded the file and opened my Finale software which then asked about midi file conversion options. Once that was done it converted the midi file into a notation file which I could playback once I opened the playback controls window. When I was finished listening I had to close the document and confirm that I did not want to save the new notation file. There are many other ways of including listening examples in HTML that do not require downloading files that may not be easily playable on most computer systems.

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: 18 out of 25

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

- The author does a good, if not excessive, job of referring to the place where a certain term was introduced. The following passage shows how comprehensively it is done, and how it might also might make the writing more difficult to read:
- "Consonance and dissonance refer to intervals (Section 1.3) and chords. The interval between two notes is the number of half steps (Section 1.2) between them, and all intervals have a name that musicians commonly use, like major third (Major and Minor Intervals, p. 14) (which is 4 half steps), perfect 5th (p. 14) (7 half steps), or octave (Section 1.1). (See Interval (Section 1.3) to learn how to determine and name the interval between any two notes.)"
- The PDF version of the book would benefit greatly by having actual HTML references embedded in the words of the text, making it much easier to read. Additionally, the same could be said for the copious footnoted HTML references. While it is wonderful to have all of these live links to useful information, their placement at the bottom of the page in footnote style makes for some very awkward reading, scrolling, linking and then finding your way back to the place you were before.

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?	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
			X			

Total Points: 5 out of 10

Overall Comments

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

- I would recommend this book, especially the easier to navigate online HTML version, as a secondary, or shadow, text. It is a good resource for learning the material, although I feel that some subjects are covered in an order that is more confusing to the student than it could be.

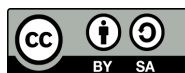
What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- To fulfill the requirements of CID MUS110 this book would need to include a section on Rhythm and Meter.
- The first examples and exercises include identifying notes on treble and bass clef staves, but no description of what those are or how they work. The author is assuming a certain level of music reading knowledge that, sadly, is often not found in today's Music Fundamentals students. For this to function as a starting-from-scratch music fundamentals book it will require just a little more foundational material.
- I have a strong concern that intervals are introduced before the study of major scales. This means that intervals are studied in a confusing mathematical realm where an major 7th = 11 half steps. Intervals can be very challenging to music fundamentals students and throwing all of the possible intervals at a student without any context of relationship to scale adds a layer of complexity that I imagine would be even more difficult for students to master. The table on page 20 is an example of this complexity that I imagine would keep a student from learning intervals effectively.
- In section 3.6 "If you know all your scales (always a good thing to know, for so many reasons), you can find all the intervals from the root using scales" This oversimplified suggestion might lead to some misconceptions about intervals in general and about extended chords (it does not work for minor 2nds (9ths))
- The section on confusion among chord symbols might be made stronger by describing a set of unambiguous chords symbols that can be used consistently when writing chord symbols.
- In 3.6.4 "If you want to add a note with a different name, just list its number (its scale degree) after the name of the chord." This does not always work for 7ths.
- When discussing extended chord symbols it should be explained that extensions alone (C13, as opposed to Cmi13) imply dominant quality chords (e.g. C13 has a C7 chord at its base).

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](#).



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