

January, 2010

Dear Colleagues:



I am pleased that you are considering adopting *Essentials of Oceanography* for your course. It is specifically designed to aid your teaching of oceanography and enhance your students' understanding of the ocean.

You might be interested to know how I got involved in co-authoring the textbook with Hal Thurman. I first met Hal during a geoscience educator's field trip to Baja California in 1991. We talked in great detail about the book and I was thrilled to have a textbook author listen to my ideas about improving his textbook. When Hal retired from teaching in 1995, he remembered me and liked my ideas, so he invited me to co-author *Essentials* with him. I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into, but I accepted. Looking back on the past 15 years and five editions, it's been a thrilling ride crafting the text into a useful resource for teaching oceanography. I am humbled and honored about the book's success.

As I work on the textbook, one underlying principle I try to keep in mind is to write the book in a similar way to how I teach the subject matter in my classes. This includes employing useful analogies, cutting-edge scientific discoveries, interesting stories, and even appropriate humor to get a point across.

Alan P. Trujillo

Distinguished Teaching Professor
Department of Earth, Space, and
Aviation Sciences
atrujillo@palomar.edu

If you're curious about the reading level, a reading comprehension analysis has been performed on the text. The reading lab at Palomar College has taken random passages of the book to analyze the content, including the number of words per sentence, the number of syllables per word, sentence structure, and use of terminology. These data are entered into a computer program that derives the reading level. I'm pleased to report that the reading level is exactly appropriate for what first-year college students ought to be able to comprehend.

However, as instructors, we all know the challenge of getting our students to read the textbook. In my classes, I've asked students how they use the textbook and many students—rather honestly—indicate that they just skim the book. I would love for all my students to read each chapter, but I know they have busy lives. That's why I've designed the book around the figures to let the figures tell the story of the chapter. That way, students can benefit from viewing just the figures, which tell a coherent picture of the main concepts within each chapter. In this edition, you'll notice many improvements in the illustration package. In addition, students will benefit from the array of Web resources, which include geoscience animations, the Online Study Guide testing modules, and Web videos, all of which are designed to help students grasp important concepts and processes.

I hope that you'll find the text appropriate for your course and take advantage of the many ancillaries that are designed to help you teach effectively. When you adopt my textbook, in a sense, you're adopting me as well. I enjoy communicating with other instructors about teaching oceanography, so please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Alan P. Trujillo

1140 West Mission Road
San Marcos, CA 92069-1487
760/744-1150
www.palomar.edu