Let's talk about what makes recommendations helpful and constructive. Specifically, we'll talk about the five components and give some examples of how to ensure we have them all in our QM feedback during peer review. The chart below shows those five components and their relationship to helpful recommendations.

As you can see from the chart, there are five components to helpful recommendations. I've paired the balanced and sensitive together, as they are similar.

Let's start with the component of "Measurable." Some examples of "measurable" factors come from verbs we often use in classes. Look at the table below for some examples of measurable and non-measurable things. Note that by focusing on measurable components that align with the rubric, we can hopefully avoid simply reacting to our own personal likes and dislikes or stylistic matters related to teaching style and focus on the design.

Ultimately, we want to make recommendations that we can then follow up on and determine if the revisions fit the QM standards. Making use of keywords from the rubric in your suggestions can help keep the focus on those measurable components, rather than personal reaction to how the instructor implements the design. Your key question here is: How will you know if the recommendations were actually implemented in revision?

As you can see from the above example, giving some specifics can really make a difference in how the course is revised.

We should approach the review in a way that really shows the designer or instructor specific things they might do to improve the course. As we start writing recommendations it might be useful to make a list first then ask ourselves those basic questions of what, how, and why. When and where are also questions that can be useful.

The questions above will also help ensure that your feedback is constructive, as well as specific. Beginning to answer the question of "how" specific aspects of the course could be improved will help ensure that you are not just pointing out problems but that you are also offering solutions.

Finally, all of these components can and should work together to ensure the review is balanced and sensitive.

Note that the examples above are suggestive, not prescriptive words like "should" or "must." The key is to remember that we are colleagues and that we're supporting each other, not judging. Keep the focus positive! Also, sharing your experiences in the suggestions can help your peer see things from a new perspective. They may even try a new tool or add resources they never considered before. And, you might stumble across new ideas for your own course by developing such good recommendations. That's the best thing about a solid peer review--everyone learns something!