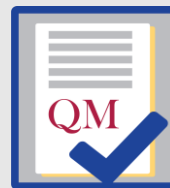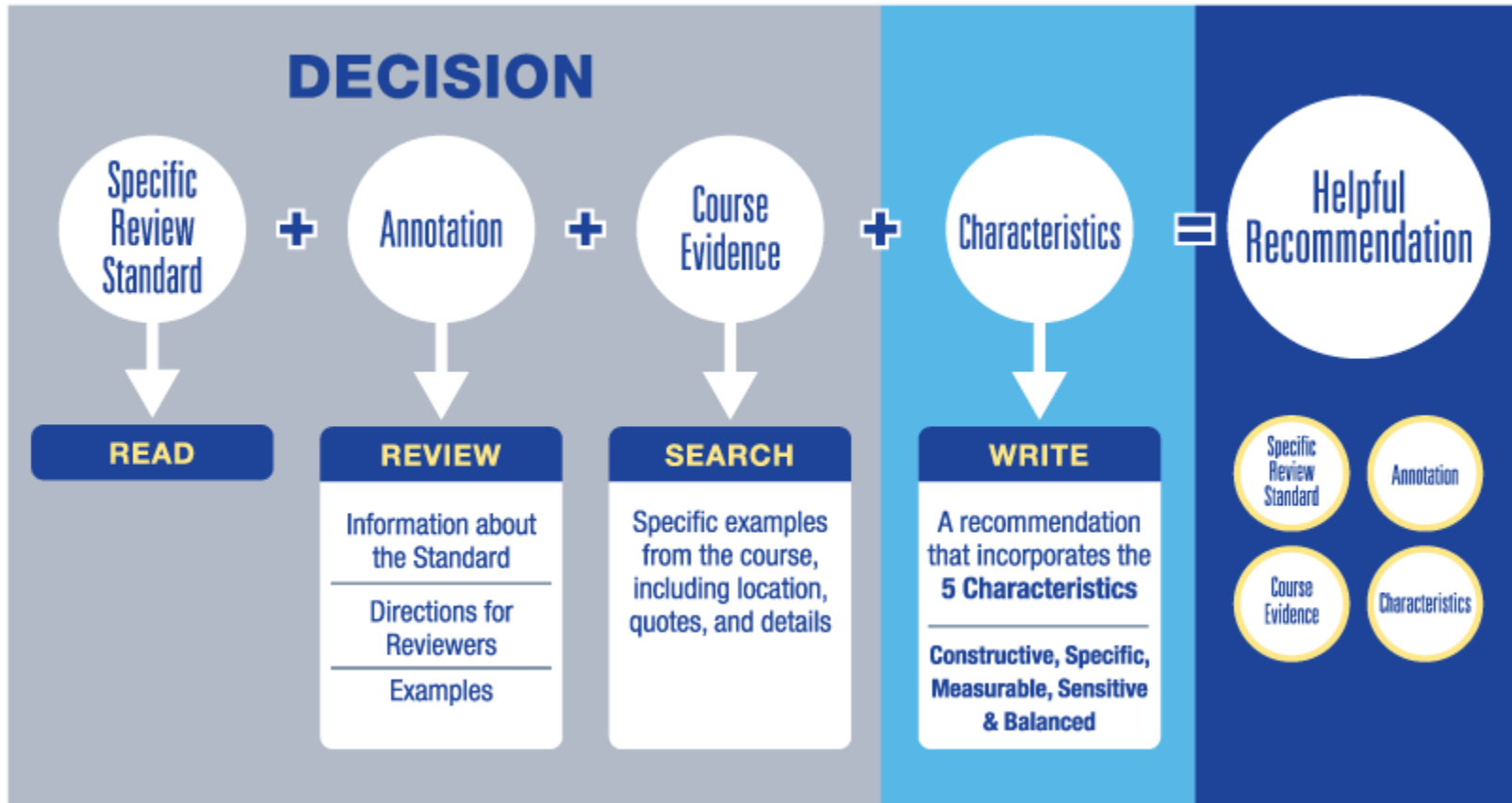# The QM Rubric Says & I Suggest:
Helpful Recommendation Resources
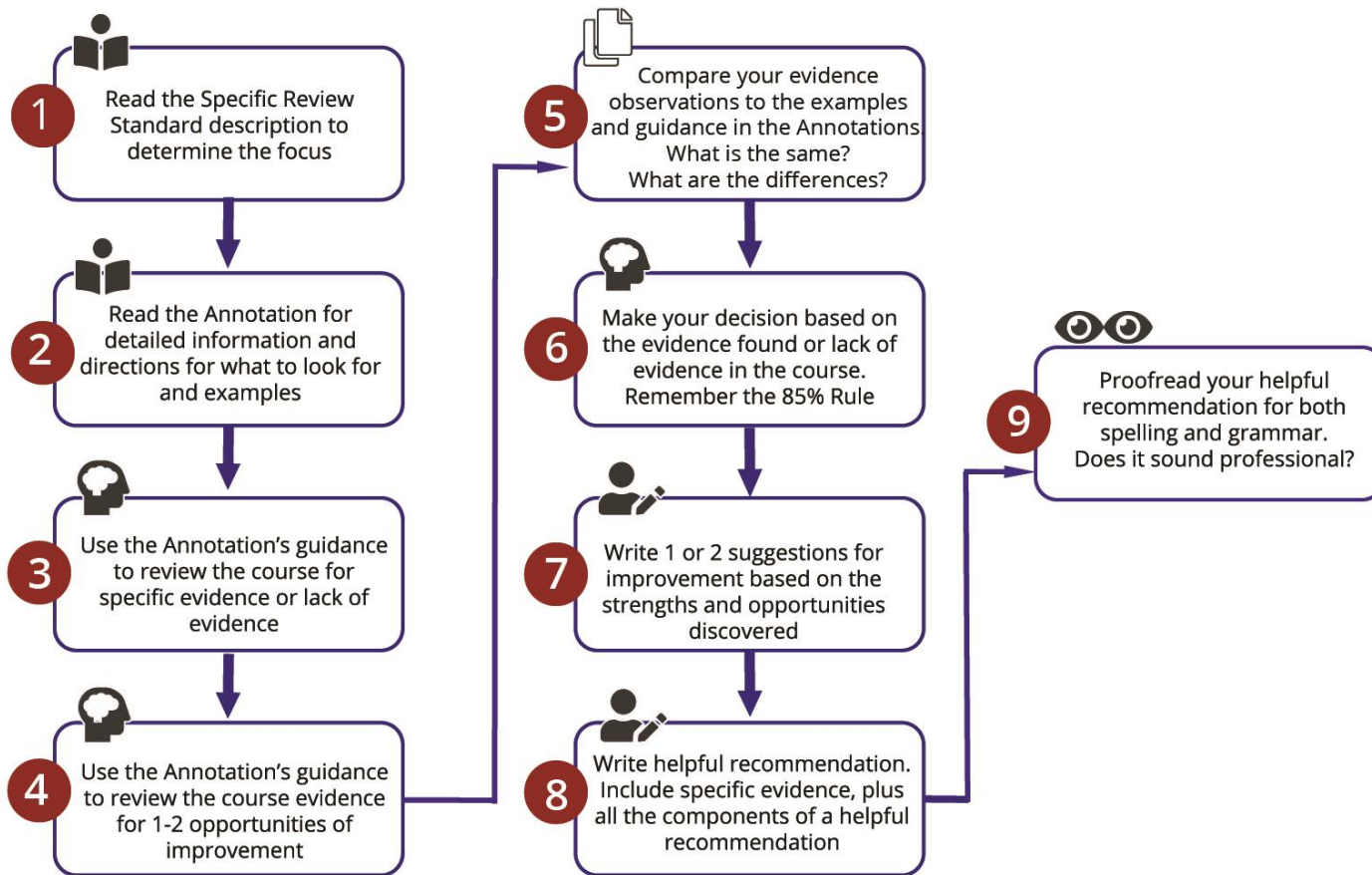
QM Connect 2019
Heidi Ash & Cheryl Oberlin

Helpful Recommendation Equation
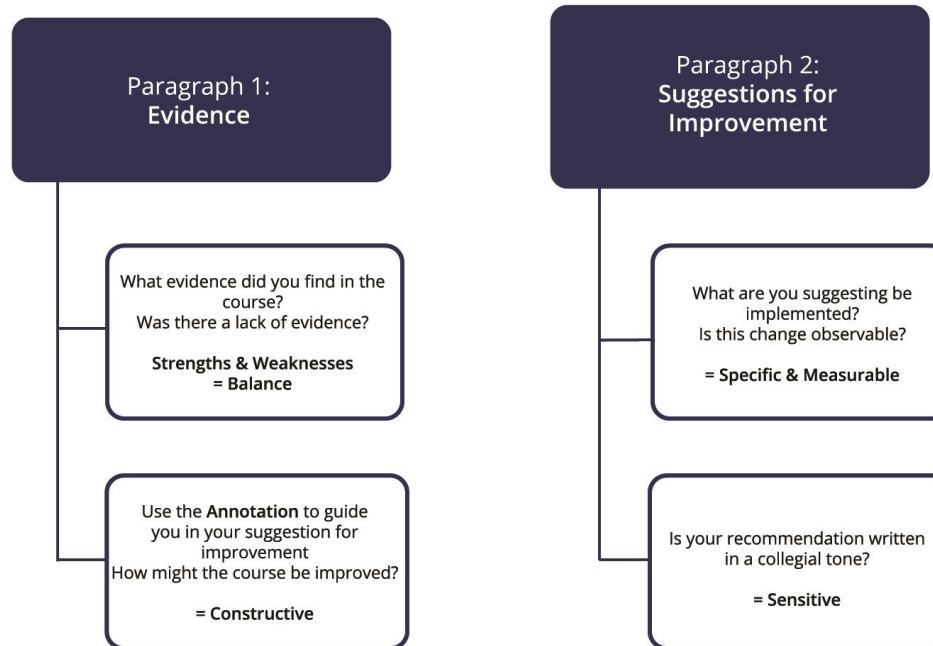
9 Steps to Writing a Helpful Recommendation

1 Read the Specific Review Standard description to determine the focus

2 Read the Annotation for detailed information and directions for what to look for and examples

3 Use the Annotation's guidance to review the course for specific evidence or lack of evidence

4 Use the Annotation's guidance to review the course evidence for 1-2 opportunities of improvement

5 Compare your evidence observations to the examples and guidance in the Annotations. What is the same? What are the differences?

6 Make your decision based on the evidence found or lack of evidence in the course. Remember the 85% Rule

7 Write 1 or 2 suggestions for improvement based on the strengths and opportunities discovered

8 Write helpful recommendation. Include specific evidence, plus all the components of a helpful recommendation

9 Proofread your helpful recommendation for both spelling and grammar. Does it sound professional?

Two Paragraphs = Your Helpful Recommendation

Writing Your Helpful Recommendation

Paragraph 1: Evidence

What evidence did you find in the course?
Was there a lack of evidence?

Strengths & Weaknesses = Balance

Use the **Annotation** to guide you in your suggestion for improvement
How might the course be improved?

= Constructive

Paragraph 2: Suggestions for Improvement

What are you suggesting be implemented?
Is this change observable?

= Specific & Measurable

Is your recommendation written in a collegial tone?

= Sensitive

Remember to carefully proofread your work to ensure it is professionally written.

Things to Remember
When Making Your Decision of "Met" or "Not Met"
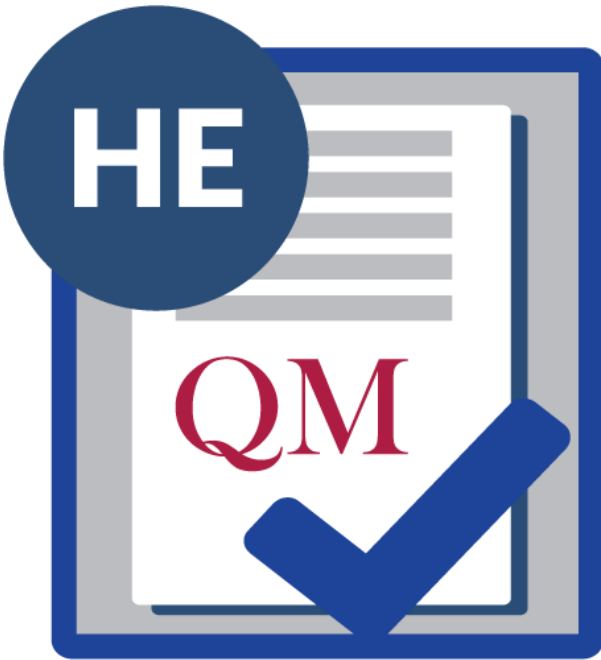
✓ What does the QM Rubric **Say?**

The QM Rubric Says ... (read the SRS and its Annotation carefully)

✓ What do You **Suggest**?

The evidence shows (2-3 items) ... and,

I Suggest (1-2 items) ...

❖ Remember: 85% **rule**

An Example Helpful Recommendation for SRS 3.1

Evidence:

Currently, only one of the module objectives is assessed. The content of the multiple/choice quiz covers the "important processes, periods, and issues in development" related to MLO1. In addition, a multiple-choice quiz allows learners to demonstrate that they can "identify" the correct information. The essay assignment appears to *partially* address the MLO's because it only asks learners to describe "one" of the main theories of human development. In contrast, MLO2 addresses more than one theory since it reads "describe the main *theories* of human development." That said, since only *one* of these theories is addressed in the essay assignment, it isn't clear how MLO2 is assessed. While the essay assignment asks learners to "identify," this action is related to "one of the main theories of human development" rather than "the most important processes, periods, and issues in development" (MLO1). As a result, the essay assignment doesn't adequately measure either MLO. Also, the prompt for the discussion forum assignment – "Explain the stages of cognitive development" - does not directly assess either of the MLOs.

Suggestion for Improvement:

It would be helpful to revise the essay assignment prompt to align with both the assessment and with the actions of MLO2. For example, I suggest rewording the prompt to ask learners to "describe the main theories of human development and their relationship to developmental philosophy." Doing so places the focus specifically on MLO2, while also providing support for the course objective.

Templates & Resources

Keep in mind, you need not use these suggested phrases verbatim (or you can if it's useful for you!) when writing helpful recommendations:

➢ Although ____ may seem _____ it's actually quite _____ for students.
➢ While it's true that _____, it would be clear to students if _____.
➢ My discussion of _____addresses the need for _____.
➢ These evidence findings are vital because students _____.
➢ At first glance, students _____. On closer inspection, _____.
   Therefore, it would be helpful to _____.
➢ The image of _____might be better explained as _____ versus having no alternative description listed.
➢ It's common for students to be comfortable with social media. However, not every student will be tech savvy. Therefore, it might help students if you _____.
➢ It is imperative (vital, critical, important) for learning objectives to be measurable. Using Bloom's Taxonomy is a fantastic way to ensure your learning objectives are measurable. For instance, _____.
➢ Students look for _____in the syllabus. It's helpful to also include a URL link to _____ in the _____ (or on the "x" page).

Templates & Resources

Let's look at some of the commonly used wording

Addition	Cause and Effect	Comparison	Example	Contrast
Adding a	Although	It would be helpful …	Also	As a result
Consider	Conversely	Students might find it easier to …	And	Accordingly
For example,	Despite	I suggest …	Besides	Since
For instance,	Even though	I recommend …		Therefore
Specifically,	While	It might help students more if …		

Example	Contrast	Sensitive
Actually	Although	It would be helpful …
Consider	Conversely	Students might find it easier to …
For example,	Despite	I suggest …
For instance,	Even though	I recommend …
Specifically,	While	It might help students more if …
		You might consider …
		Guiding students on … is helpful.
		Ensuring students have access to …
		Often, it's helpful for students if you …

Templates & Resources

Let's look at some Words or Phrases to Avoid as each carries a Negative Connotation or is Insensitive

Negative	Prescriptive or Superior	Opinion
However,	Must	In my class …
But,	Should	The way I list it …
Do not	The correct way …	I would …
Does not	The right way …	At my institution …
Did not	You are doing (this) wrong …	
Failed	The way I list it is ..	
Shortcomings	It's a better idea to …	
Incorrect		
Mistake		

❖   You may be able to think of others.
❖   It helps to read your recommendation aloud, then
     decide if a colleague suggested "this improvement" to you for your course
     would you consider it to be "helpful?'

Starting a Conversation with a Colleague about Change

How Do You Start a Conversation about Evidence Findings?

➢ **Create a list of the course's strengths and explain the significance of them. For example,**

✓ The syllabus is found in the Getting Started area of the course and contains policies for Academic Integrity (page 4), Attendance (page 3), Late Work (page 6), and … Students will easily find these policies since they are placed in the Getting Started area and in the Syllabus itself. *Example for SRS 1.4*

✓ Captions for the *To Kill a Mockingbird* video in Module 3 are accurate and will provide a solid option for students with diverse learning needs. *Example for SRS 8.4*

➢ Describe the course's weaknesses and/or explain what's missing in the course.

✓ Although the course has a separate section for instructional materials and many readings are listed, there is no mention of *The Alchemist*. Students are required to read it in Module 4, then respond to three questions in a discussion board on its storyline. *Example for SRS 4.1*

✓ The syllabus notes much of the information students need to know about the course, plus related institutional policies. One item students may find useful is a late work policy. There is a reference to turning in work late for "extreme emergencies," but there's no definition of what constitutes an "extreme" emergency." *Example for SRS 1.4*

Starting a Conversation with a Colleague about Change

➢ It's always a good idea to start a recommendation with a sensitive, respectful voice. You can do so in many ways.

For example,

✓ Learning activities in the course offer a wide variety of engagement opportunities for learners. For example, learner-learner engagement is found in Modules 3, 4 and 7 where students participate in peer critiques. Learner-instructor engagement is noted in Module 5 where feedback on all discussion board postings is provided. And, learner-content interaction is featured in the modules with assigned readings; specifically, Modules 3 and 4. *Example for SRS 5.2*

✓ Students have the opportunity to learn several new tools by working through course assignments. There are opportunities to use Quizlet in Module 6, Articulate Storyline in Module 8, Turnitin in Modules 3, 4 and 5, plus Twitter in Module 7. You've created solid overview statements for each of these tools to explain their purpose in correlation with the learning activities. If a student has any questions about why a certain tool is being used he or she can simply read the overview statement for a complete explanation. *Example for SRS 6.1*

Thank YOU!

Heidi & Cheryl

QM Professional Development Specialists

QM Connect 2019 - Dallas, Texas