tips for effective peer review

1. Be prepared to say back to the designer(s) your grasp of their intentions with such clarity and empathy that they will be completely receptive to your critical feedback and guidance.

2. The reviewers should be friendly, honest consultants (critical friends) to the designer. The designer's intent is the basis of the review. *The aim is to improve the designer's idea, not replace it with the reviewers' teaching priorities, style, or favorite activities.*

3. The designer's job in the second session is primarily to listen, not explain, defend, or justify design decisions.

4. The reviewers' job is twofold: first, to give useful feedback (Did the effect match the intent?); second, to give useful guidance (How might the gaps in intent vs. effect be removed? How might the design be improved, given the intent?).

5. Designers typically assume that their design is more self-evident than it is. *Imagine yourself to be a naive student:* would you know what to do? Would the flow of the unit be obvious? Do you know how you will be assessed? Is the purpose of the work clear? Etc.

6. The key criterion for judging the success of a peer review: The designer feels that the design was understood by peers and improved (or validated) by the subsequent critique and discussion.

7. Always begin by offering feedback in those areas where the design most conforms to the design criteria, describing in detail how/where the design met those criteria.

8. Reviewers give feedback, making clear the basis for the comments in the match (or mismatch) between targeted achievements, assessments, and design of learning and teaching, in reference to the design standards. Couching feedback about possible mismatches in question or conditional form may be appropriate: "We wondered about the validity of the assessment task, in light of the specified goal..." "If your aim is critical thinking, then the assessments don't seem to demand more than recall..."

9. Reviewers give guidance in each area where they perceive a gap between intent and effect or some confusion about the design's purpose or execution. Note that guidance should improve the designer's intent, not substitute the reviewers' tastes or goals for such a unit.

Stage 1 - Desired Results	
To what extent does the unit calendar and lessons design: **1. focus on the "big ideas" of targeted content?** **2. frame the "big ideas" around essential questions?**	
Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence	
To what extent do the unit and lesson assessments provide: **3. valid, reliable and sufficient measures of the desired results?**	
Stage 3 - Learning Plan	
To what extent are the unit and lessons learning plan: **4. effective and engaging?**	
Overall Design	
To what extent is the entire unit: **5. coherent, with the elements of all 3 stages aligned?**	

Adapted from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2001).