Suggestions for Working with Item Reviewers

1. Don't show them the key right away. Make them try to figure out the answer for themselves.
2. Is there any situation/interpretation that could make one of the other answers correct?
3. Look at the options that high-scoring students chose. Can you think of a reason why they might have picked it?
4. Look at the options no one picked. Is there a way to make them more attractive (w/o making them possibly correct)?
5. Is there any difference in structure or wording between the key and the distractors that might help test-wise students figure out which one is correct, or tell which are wrong?
6. Look at the cognitive/reading load in the question. Are there multiple phrases/clauses to keep track of? Is there a negative in it (which carries a huge cognitive load – I recommend eliminating all NOT, LEAST, EXCEPT, etc. questions)?
7. Is it grammatically correct?
8. Look at the average time spent on the item. Ambiguous items take longer, even when they're easy (see Question #1 on the attached file, for example). If you are considering adding more items w/o adding more time, avoid choosing items that take longer to answer.
9. Look at the number of correct A, B, C, and D options. Try to make those the same (unless, of course, your software scrambles the options)
10. Do not hesitate to tell the software to scramble the *item* order. It's generally a good thing. Scrambling *option* order can be a little trickier, depending on whether they unscramble them in your data file.
11. Is this something that some groups might have learned outside of your educational program? Those groups might have an unfair advantage. (potential item bias)
12. Consider creating a Style Guide, telling them what kinds of questions to write in the future (e.g., Only complete sentences ending with a question mark, omit "of the following," don't use names or initials for patients, specify which abbreviations can be used without elaboration, don't mention gender unless it is relevant, etc.)
13. Is the content coding complete and correct?