

RTD Validity Committee Facilitator Responsibilities

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The RTD (Rigorous Test Development) project is an attempt to build a professionalized content development practice that focuses on individual item quality, particularly by leaning into the importance of validity throughout the content development process. It assumes that content development professionals develop professional judgment that can be raised, honed and calibrated by providing frameworks and clarifying expectations in ways that account for the constraints and demands of typical practice within test development, today. RTD is a conscious and deliberate attempt to respond to the disparity in status, training and shared knowledgebases between psychometrically oriented professionals and content development professionals.



Content Validity Review Committee

Facilitator Responsibilities

Purpose/Mission: 1) The purpose/mission of the committee is to gather *the best feedback possible* for the items so that their validity can be assured. Everything else is in the service of that goal. 2) You are responsible for remembering this, and for reminding the committee (on occasion) that this is the group's charge. 3) Do not confuse the *means* by which we try to accomplish this goal with being your goal or mission.

Audience Awareness: 1) The *primary audience* for the discussions of the Content Validity Committee are the lead content specialists at the client and at the vendor. 2) You are responsible for keeping the discussion on an issue or item going as long as *that primary audience* requires or requests it to assure their understanding, and ending the discussion once that understanding has been achieved. 3) Other vendor or client representatives may be part of that primary audience or not – decided on a case by case basis by explicit discussion before the committee meeting begins. 4) You may – and often should – accept that some other members of the committee may not understand or be convinced by a point, issue or objection and therefore end that discussion and move on.

Process Questions: You are responsible for explaining the nature of process questions, listening for them and even explicitly asking the committee for them. All process questions should be directed to you, even if they need to be discussed by the group.

Momentum: At their best, Validity Committee meetings are intense and exhausting, and are subject to time constraints and the endurance limits of the committee members. *You* are responsible for cutting off discussion and moving on to the next issue and/item once the needs of the primary audience have been met. *You* are responsible for corralling the discussion and bringing it back on point when it strays. *You* are responsible for cutting off repetition of complaints or prior discussions (unless they add new insight or depth).

Discussion/Disorder: The best feedback and explorations of ideas and items will come from interactive discussion between members of the committee (and sometimes the primary audience). However, such discussions can devolve into disorder and talking over each other – especially in teleconferences. You are responsible for *managing an appropriate balance* of interactive discussion and ordered comments. Do not limit the participants to only speaking when given your permission to speak, but do not let the discussion devolve into people talking over each other. You are also responsible ensuring that there is *room for discussion* after an issue has been raised before the next issue is raised.

Clarifying Questions: Because people are often less than perfectly clear in their comments, you are responsible for making room for – and *establishing a norm of* – interrupting so that clarifying questions may be asked of participants in the discussion. You must also recognize (and even clarify to others) the difference between asking clarifying questions and raising new issues. You are responsible for encouraging clarifying questions (explicitly and implicitly) and not discouraging them.

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Connecting the Discussions: Because issues often reoccur in slightly different forms and because better feedback is generated from a collaborative process, it is important to explicitly *connect comments to prior comments* and to the originators of those prior comments – even to the point of exaggerating prior contributions. You are responsible for modeling the making of connective comments (e.g. “Building on what Eric said earlier...,” “This might be another example of Eric’s point from earlier...,” “Does this make us think differently about Eric’s point from earlier...”) and for encouraging (explicitly and implicitly) participants to make such comments themselves.

“Equal” Participation: As the purpose of the Content Validity meetings is to generate useful feedback, so long as contributions are productive and/or useful, participants are never to be punished or pushed into a secondary role for the quantity of their participation (e.g. intentionally putting them aside to favor others in discussion or otherwise avoiding calling on them). You are responsible for *encouraging* facilitative comments and other high quality comments. You are not to discourage participation of committee members in misguided attempts to arrive at consensus or to “hear from everyone.”

Defense of Work: The urge to defend oneself and one’s work is very strong. However, Content Validity Review Committees are *not* the appropriate forum. You are responsible for cutting off such comments so that participants can focus on offering feedback (e.g. spotting issues or offering suggestions). If an item developer is asked, s/he may answer direct questions about an item. However, you are responsible for keeping this rare. (Note: Questions about indicators, focusing themes and content topics/sub-topics should be addressed as often as needed.)

Facilitator Participation: Meeting facilitation is a difficult and attention consuming set of responsibilities, and therefore – whenever possible -- should not be performed by members of the primary audience. You are responsible for limiting your speaking to facilitation, unless you explicitly *ask permission* of the group on each occasion.

Note Taker: The note taker should be entirely focused on taking accurate notes. S/he should only be heard if s/he needs something repeated. Ideally, committee members will not be aware of the note taker’s presence. You are responsible for ensuring that s/he does not offer comments, suggestions or even clarifying questions.

Conflict/Disrespect: The best feedback will come from discussions that include conflict of ideas or even over ideas. However, disagreement should be confined to the ideas; disrespect – or even insults – should not be directed at participants in the meeting. You are responsible for addressing this *immediately*. You may do so out loud to the whole group or through some other channel (e.g. use of the WebEx’s chat function, provided you have explained the function and are sure that the participant you mean to address has that window open.). This can include gentle reminders, explanations that comments not intended to be disrespect/insult may have been received as such or even forcibly muting or removing the offending participant from the meeting.