I. Research to Confirm
A. Does the test reflect the curriculum?
1. Is it an essay or multiple choice test?
2. What essay topics are appropriate?
B. Does the test's units of measurement truly measure statistically what teachers want to be measured (that is, does the test drive the statistics or do the statistics drive the test)?
C. Does the test adequately describe the population?

II. Research to Monitor
A. Is the test being administered correctly (setting, timing for its target population, security, etc.)
B. Is the test holding steady over time? (e.g., the CUNY audit)

III. Research to Explore
A. What results are derived from essays written in various modes of discourse?
B. What time variables are best for essay tests? (20 minutes to 2 days to x)
C. What scoring innovations are possible?
1. What possibilities are there for scoring essay tests other than holistic, primary trait, or analytic?
2. How can "gain score" adjustments be made for essay test scores?
D. How do student attitudes relate to test performance?

THE POLITICS OF TESTING
Facilitator: Richard Hendrix, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

After a brief comment on the meaning "politics" has for him ("the 'politics' I see daily are national issues..."testing is not that much debated in the halls of government"), Richard Hendrix invited those assembled to introduce themselves, to say where they come from, and to state briefly what "politics" in the context of testing means to them. For a number of people, particularly those from large public institutions, "politics" related to external factors, such as convincing legislators and university administrators of the value of strong writing programs. Others focused on internal issues in using the term "politics." For example, can testing provide a means of convincing faculty in other departments to support a program of writing across the curriculum? What effect does testing have on students? Does it help them master writing more quickly or only catch "losers" earlier? What effect does testing have on teaching? Does it, for instance, contradict what we have learned about the composing process? What are the societal implications of testing? Does it close off higher education to the minorities or the poor?

Much of the discussion focused on ways of gathering college-wide support for a program in writing across the curriculum. Testing can help by concreely defining levels of student ability. When testing involves a writing sample, it communicates to faculty and to students that writing is much more than grammar, and it helps clarify relationships between thinking and writing.

Another concern of the group involved the use of tests: given that tests are here, how do we make the best use of them? A number of suggestions emerged. Have faculty take the writing test to see what the experience is like and to be better prepared to deal with student reaction to...