RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Facilitator: Lynn Quitman Troyka, *Queensborough Community College*

Lynn Quitman Troyka opened the session by briefly describing a "taxonomy of purposes for research in writing assessment" that she had recently developed. Troyka explained that she had created her taxonomy in an effort to set contexts for current and future research in the testing of writing. Troyka suggested that this taxonomy can help researchers discover research opportunities because it seeks to clarify what research has been done and what research still needs to be done. Troyka noted that the taxonomy categorizes research according to three major purposes. Each purpose is then delineated with key questions.

After presenting her taxonomy, Troyka asked each person at the discussion session (N=35) to introduce himself/herself, to share with the group whatever research question she/he was presently interested in. Troyka also asked each person to try out the taxonomy, in part to use the taxonomy as an organizing focus of the discussion and in part to help flesh out the taxonomy. Finally, as the discussion began Troyka urged people to take notes about other people's questions so that the network concept of NTNW could be carried on beyond the days of the conference. The taxonomy follows:

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?