



WRITING CENTER AND ITS SUPPORTIVE ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING AT THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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Outline of the Study

- 🔦 FAQs
- 🔦 Preface
- 🔦 Introduction

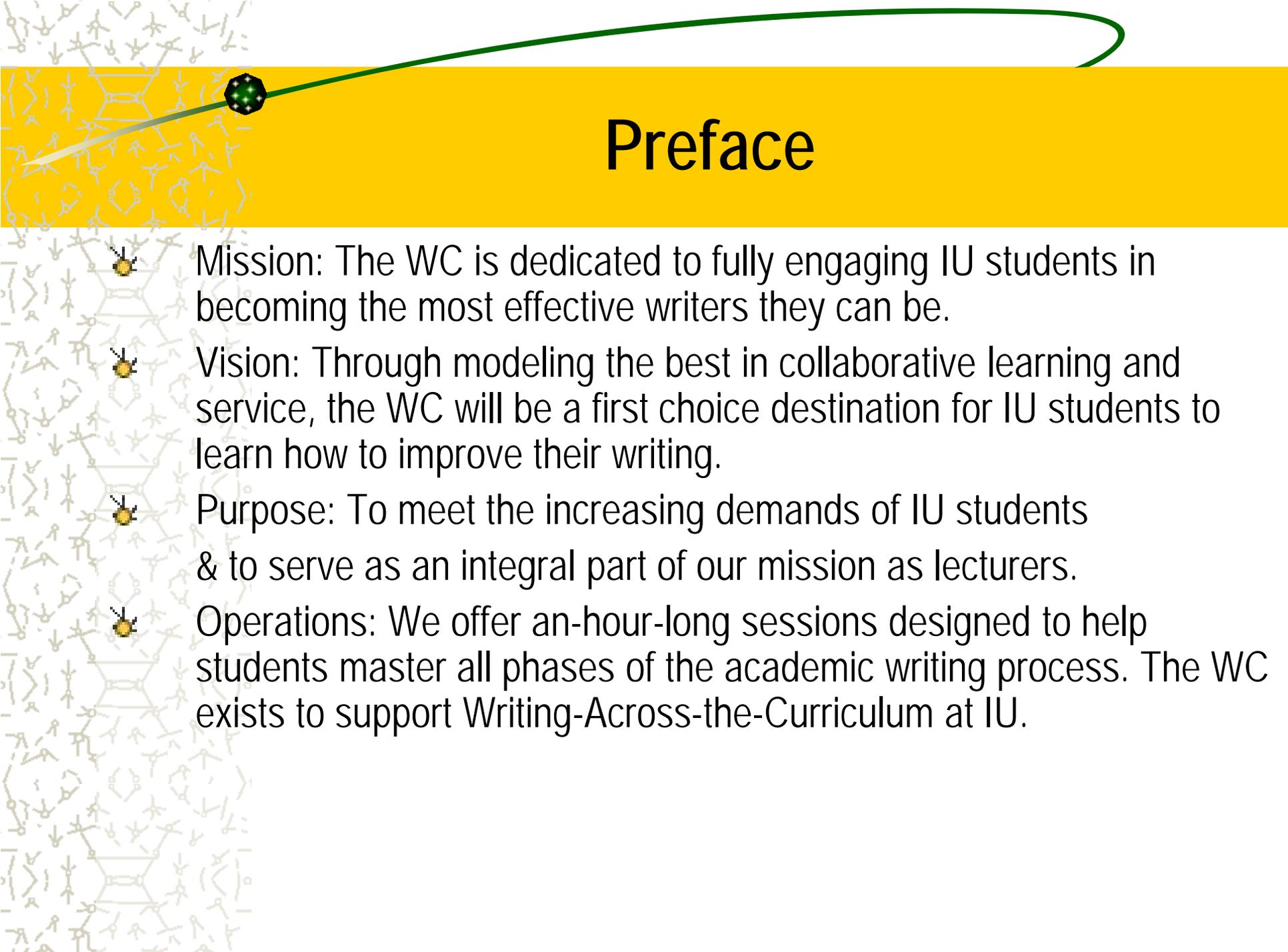
- 🔦 The Aim
- 🔦 Literature Review
- 🔦 Method
- 🔦 Findings

- 🔦 Conclusions
- 🔦 References
- 🔦 Discussions

Writing Center - FAQs



- 💡 What: WC – Free service
- 💡 Who: All IU Community
- 💡 When: since 2009
- 💡 Where: Room 509 – Department of English
- 💡 How: Professional conduct from experienced tutors



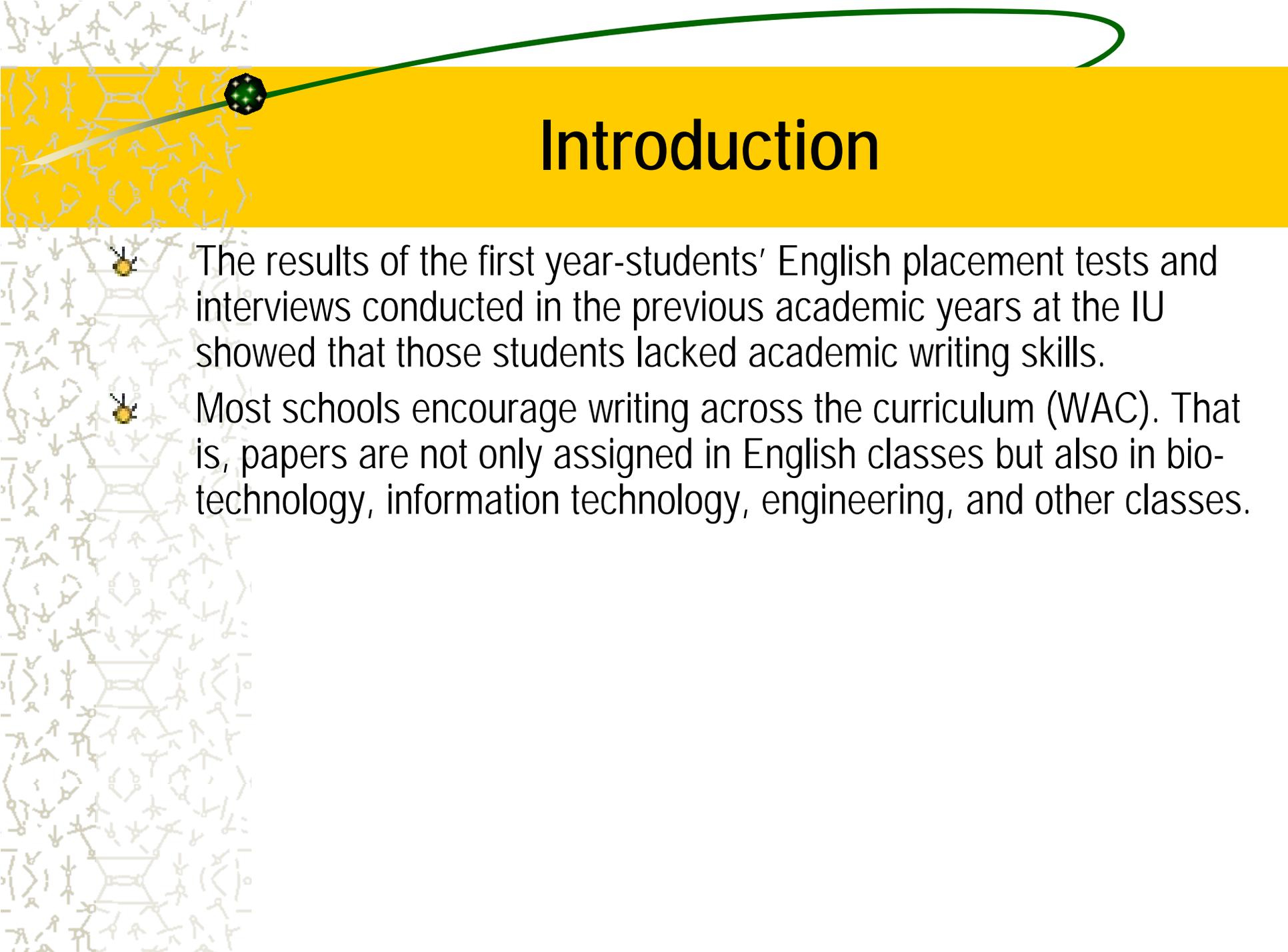
Preface

✿ Mission: The WC is dedicated to fully engaging IU students in becoming the most effective writers they can be.

✿ Vision: Through modeling the best in collaborative learning and service, the WC will be a first choice destination for IU students to learn how to improve their writing.

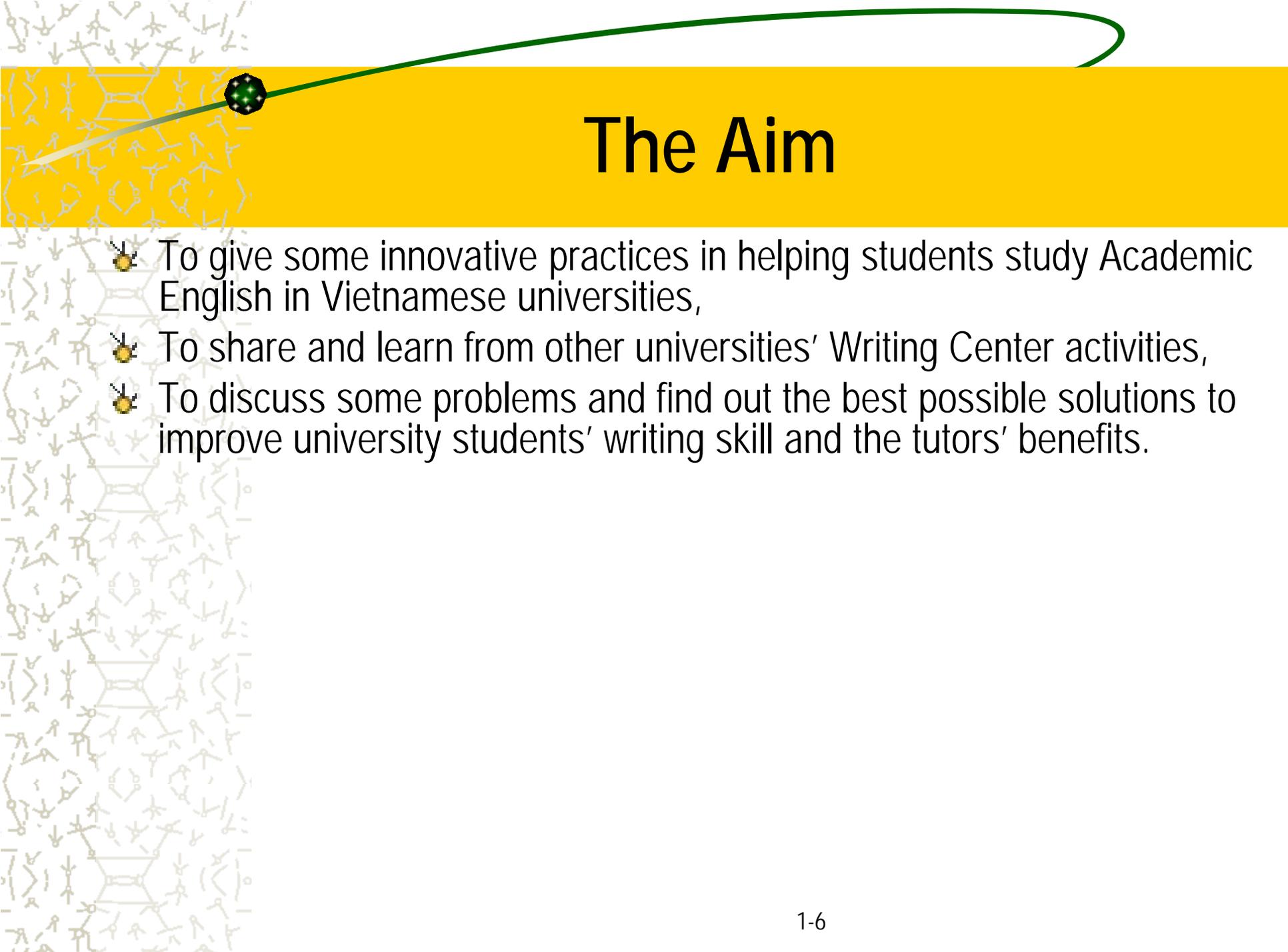
✿ Purpose: To meet the increasing demands of IU students & to serve as an integral part of our mission as lecturers.

✿ Operations: We offer an-hour-long sessions designed to help students master all phases of the academic writing process. The WC exists to support Writing-Across-the-Curriculum at IU.



Introduction

- The results of the first year-students' English placement tests and interviews conducted in the previous academic years at the IU showed that those students lacked academic writing skills.
- Most schools encourage writing across the curriculum (WAC). That is, papers are not only assigned in English classes but also in biotechnology, information technology, engineering, and other classes.



The Aim

- ✿ To give some innovative practices in helping students study Academic English in Vietnamese universities,
- ✿ To share and learn from other universities' Writing Center activities,
- ✿ To discuss some problems and find out the best possible solutions to improve university students' writing skill and the tutors' benefits.

Literature Review

- ✦ A study by Kubota revealed that Asian college students like Japanese, Vietnamese with appropriate supervision, tend to respond positively to a more collaborative style of writing or writing in which dialogue between themselves as writers and others help them to achieve a final goal (Kubota, 1999).
- ✦ Independent writing requires facilitation, and this writing style is normally achieved through successful “dialogue” between writer and assessor through teacher feedback at every stage of the writing process (Atkinson & Cannor, 2008).
- ✦ Another study from Stephen M. North (Murphy, C., & Sherwood, S. 2008), the idea of a writing center is important for tutors in contrasting two models of writing center instruction - one that stresses “the correction of textual problems” and another that focuses on the writer’s intellectual and personal involvement in the creation of texts.

Method

Participants:

- ✚ 100 first-year students were selected for the study (roughly 20% of the total students enrolled in that academic year).
- ✚ Students were selected to represent different schools, including BA, BT, EE, IT, ISE, BME.

Measurements:

- ✚ The result of a survey considering the students' and tutors' perceptions into whether or not the Writing Center services help.
- ✚ A comparison of students' academic records including their scores from mid-term exam and final exam their academic writing.

Findings

Supportive Roles in Teaching Academic Writing from the Writing Center:

✚ Tutoring activities:

- The tutor provides face-to-face consultations for the students, faculty, and staff of all schools of the IU.
- Consultations are available for students of all majors.

✚ Workshop:

- A monthly workshop is scheduled for presenters (who are teachers).
- The workshop focuses on two main aspects, "toolbox" issues (lower-order concerns) and "expert" issues (higher-order concerns).
- Teachers can follow the syllabus so as to develop WAC contents for the participants.

Findings

With the number of hundreds of visitors enrolled in the WC activities every academic year. We chose 100 students as the object for the survey and evaluation of satisfaction of the WC. The data was analyzed based on the 2 aspects including the degree of satisfaction of the writer and the improvement of academic writing from students after having enrolled the WC consultation.

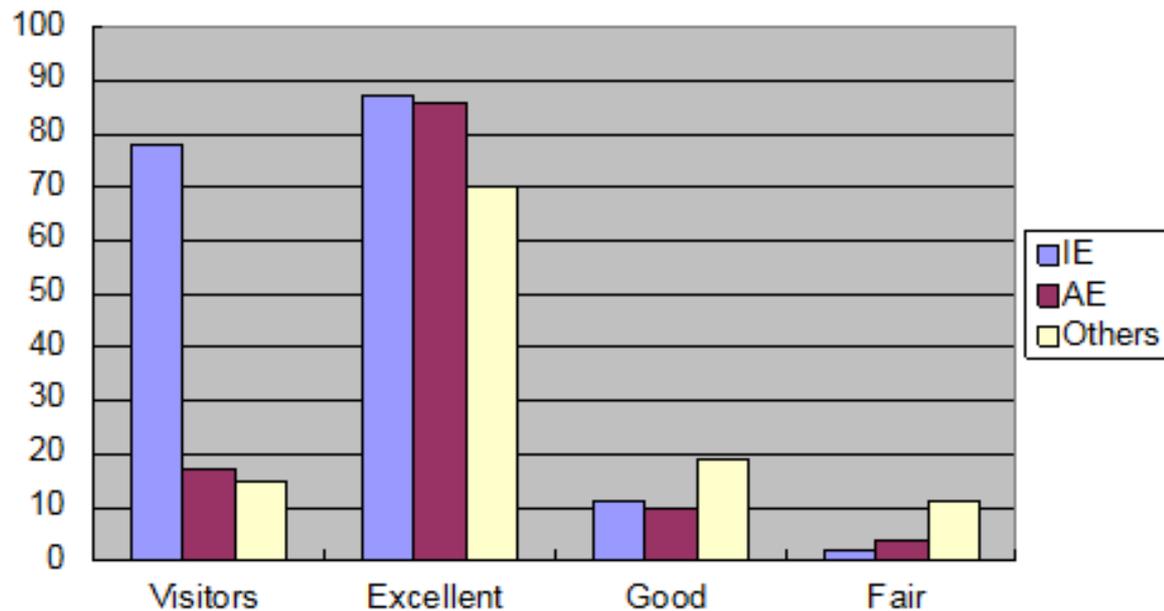


Figure 1: Satisfaction level of the WC activities through the consultation

Findings

In addition, Figure 2 & Figure 3 show the dramatic improvement in academic writing score from midterm test exam score to the final exam score as well as the assignment score (not all students from the student list are enrolled in the WC assistance). We took some student IDs for the demonstration:

	Student ID	Mid-term score	Assignment score (group work & project)	Final exam score
01	BAFNIU14086	53	66	75
02	BAFNIU14089	43	68	57
03	IELSIU14055	40	71	70
04	BTFTIU14054	63	70	70
05	BABAIU14188	45	68	59

Figure 4: Progressive analysis of academic writing improvement with the support from WC

Assessments

Statistics:

✚ Total of assessment sheets: 100

✚ Levels: IE1: 80% IE2: 10% Others: 10%

✚ Assessment of the session

Very well: 90% Well: 10%

✚ Assessment of tutors

Very interested: 90% Somewhat interested: 10%

Conclusions

- ✦ Writing Center has brought quite many benefits for both the students and the teachers in teaching academic writing.
- ✦ The experimental data supported my hypothesis, indicating that with the assistance from the WC, students (writers) have a significant improvement through three criteria including the mid-term examination, the assignment, and the final examination.
- ✦ Through my research as well as my experience, I discovered that the WC plays a very positive role in improving the language skills, especially the academic writing skill.

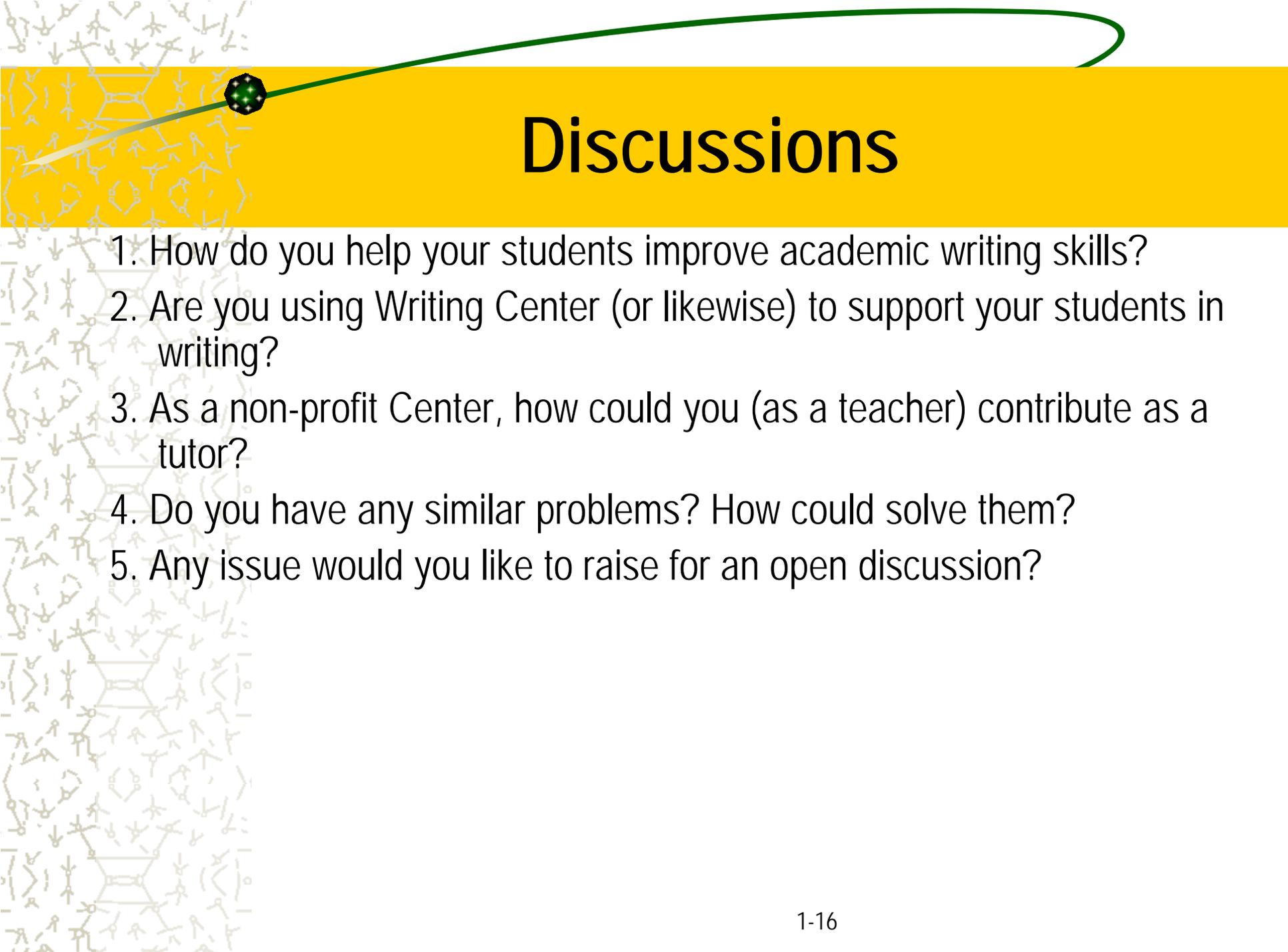
Recommendations

For writing teachers who tutor students at the Writing Center and consider it as a media to help your students improve academic writing skills, the recommendations are described as follows:

- ✦ It's essential to keep abreast of reference books on Writing Center bookshelves. Even if teachers aren't assigned to read a particular essay, you should already be looking through the various books and appendices located in the Center.
- ✦ Don't ever make the mistake of thinking that you already know pretty much everything you need to know about this line of work. There's always another insight or perspective you can learn from.

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Discussions

1. How do you help your students improve academic writing skills?
2. Are you using Writing Center (or likewise) to support your students in writing?
3. As a non-profit Center, how could you (as a teacher) contribute as a tutor?
4. Do you have any similar problems? How could solve them?
5. Any issue would you like to raise for an open discussion?