

TEACHING BUSINESS WRITING SKILLS AT RIT CROATIA: A CASE STUDY

Zrinka Friganovic Sain

zrinka.friganovic-sain@croatia.rit.edu

RIT Croatia, Dubrovnik, Croatia

Abstract

One of the skills employers today look for most is the ability to analyze data and articulate clear and meaningful conclusions based on that data. The benefits of having strong writing skills at work also include the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with colleagues and clients, appear professional in emails and other written documents, and the ability to ensure quality in external or client-facing presentations and materials. Candidates, who can find creative ways to explain their positions or standpoints, and support their ideas with solid evidence, are useful in almost any department. Moreover, the ability to clearly communicate both, inside and outside an organization, within the parameters of accepted market branding and company philosophy, means consistent and professional messaging, which has become one of the qualities most looked for in today's business. To help students maintain these skills and to extend the focus on writing during all four years of study, RIT Croatia has launched a Writing across the Curriculum Initiative. In this initiative, writing is not viewed only as a need to master a set of conventions but as a natural part of the students' need to gain more thorough understanding of subject knowledge. Writing Lab is a RIT Croatia writing center that provides online and live support to undergraduate students in becoming more confident, inventive, and professionally dynamic writers. The purpose of this paper is to identify the type of support that RIT Croatia students of all year levels report as needed and to investigate if their reported needs and/or concerns belong more to higher-order language concerns (audience, genre, use of sources) or lower-order language concerns (grammar, editing, formatting).

Key words: teaching business writing skills, technical communication, writing lab center, professional writing

1. Introduction

1.1. The history of writing centers (WC) in American higher education

According to Neal Lerner¹, professor of English at the American Northeastern University, the creation of writing centers in the United States has been either standardized or institutionalized. In his interview with Violeta Molina-Latera in 2016, Lerner connects the creation of writing centers in the U.S. primarily to enrollment issues and to several other reasons, such as class issues or socioeconomics. Lerner asserts that the creation of writing centers became one of the responses of the U.S. institutions of higher education towards literacy. As the access to U.S. higher education broadened at the end of the 19th century, it became clear that the new coming generations of students were far less prepared than previous generations, since they evidently belonged more to the working class, and had come to universities through public schools, rather than elite private schools. Institutions across the country recognized the need to do something to solve the problem. The creation of writing centers soon led to the organizational need to nominate someone in the institution to administer the work of these centers, which, simultaneously, gave that person a certain status inside the academic community and, ultimately, led to wider recognition and visibility of writing centers and the overall improvement of their status within institutions of higher education. Even though the broadening of higher education in the U.S. had started already in the 1890s, Lerner states that this model of writing centers became more widespread in the U.S. only in the 1930s (Molina Latera, 2016).

1.2. The National Census of Writing in the higher education of the United States

When it was launched in March of 2013, the National Census of Writing (NCW) sought to provide a databased outlook of writing instruction at two- and four-year public and not-for-profit institutions of higher education in the United States (<https://writingcensus.ucsd.edu>). Even though numerous attempts had been made previously

¹ Neal Lerner is Chair and Professor of English at College of Sciences and Humanities (Northeastern University, US). Lerner teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in writing and is the author of over 40 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on the history, theory, and practice of learning and teaching writing, and a five-time recipient of the International Writing Centers Association Outstanding Scholarship Award. His book *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory* won the 2011 NCTE David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English. He is co-author with Paula Gillespie of *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, a recognized book for training writing tutors.

to find relevant empirical data to establish the design and administration of writing programs and writing centers in the U.S., the 2013 edition of the Census seems to be the first comprehensive study of its kind. The second edition of the census used data from the 2017/2018 academic year and was built on the success of the first version, covering in the research and survey, according to the official page of NCW, many areas such as: First-Year Writing, Upper-Level Writing Courses, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), Basic Writing, Writing Centers and others.

The last Census thus contains data from over 1,000 institutions of higher education in the United States, and it allows researchers to gather local and national data on some crucial questions for the literacy inside the academia. The data also helps both educators and administrators to better understand the variety of ways in which writing instruction is structured and delivered in the U.S. academia in the 21st century. According to the data retrieved from the official page of the NCW, the database is searchable by type of institution, institutional size, geographical location, and, by the name of the institution (if the consent of the institution had been previously granted). The second version of the Census used the same type of data collection as the previous version of 2013, using an existing, generated list of non-profit and public, four-year institutions in the United States from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The 2017 Census database is an incredible source of data for all researchers who would like to investigate the network of writing centers in the United States in the undergraduate programs. The Census includes data from 727 institutions of higher education that offer undergraduate programs: 623 of the existing 1315 four-year institutions participated in the survey (a 47% response rate) and 104 of the 829 two-year institutions (a 13% response rate). The data of NCW does not include medical schools, law schools, or other institutions that offer only graduate programs. It is interesting to note that, in order to remain in the database, institutions needed to complete at least one section of the Census.

1.3. The purpose of the writing center in American higher education: a place or a method?

In his highly influential essay, *The Idea of a Writing Center* published in 1984, Stephen North attempted to define the field of writing centers: "In a writing center the object is to make sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction. In axiom form it goes like this: Our job is to produce better writers, not better writing" (North, 1984, p. 438). Other researchers have often seen this essay as a form of appeal for understanding of intent, ethos, and mission of writing centers. Since its publication in 1984, the essay has achieved the status of "the single most important and most quoted essay in writing center scholarship" (Murphy and Law, 1995). No

other article about this topic has been invoked more frequently to identify, justify and legitimize the work that writing centers do (or hope to do) in their institutions (Boquet and Lerner, 2008). Nevertheless, it seems that the change that North has so clearly supported regarding the purpose and the mission of writing centers has evidently not been completely recognized either by instructors themselves, administrative bodies of the institutions of higher education or by students seeking help and support in writing. According to his own words, the change that he wanted to see applied was primarily related to those of English department colleagues who were misguided and have made writing centers undesirable places where grammar drill ruled (North, 1984).

In 1994, exactly ten years after the publication of his essay, North wrote another essay, which he symbolically named *Revisiting "The Idea of a Writing Center"*. Even though he clearly recognized the impact of his first essay, "I think the essay was reasonably effective for its audience: placed prominently in College English, it gave lots of essentially ignorant but well-meaning people pause. Tactically speaking, in other words, it worked pretty well" (North, 1994, p. 9), North also wanted to clarify some of his original concepts and ideas. In his second essay, North thus revisits the work of writing centers, going "behind the scenes", as he states himself, offering a detailed overview of the work of writing centers based on his personal experience and work in these centers, revisiting the image those centers have in his eyes. He looks particularly at the relationship between the tutor and the writer, the tutor and the teacher, and the tutor and the institution itself. In his insightful sequel, North compares some concepts offered in the movie "Dead Poets Society" by Peter Weir to the ideas he argued in his first essay. Even though the movie does offer beautiful cinematic moments, North believes that it nevertheless gave a rather tragic picture of a truly committed English teacher who ends up being expelled. To North, this is a sad analogy to the functioning of writing centers: they often agree to serve as literacy scapegoats with little, if any, power to change flawed institutional arrangements (in the same way professor Keating in the movie could not change the institutional beliefs of Welton). Nevertheless, North does seem to offer a possibility to change the (unfortunate!?) image of writing centers and their position inside the institutions by restructuring both: writing curriculum and writing centers themselves, and (finally) addressing real problems of the writing program life, thus completely renegotiating the place of writing in post-secondary education (North, 1994).

Neal Lerner is another researcher who has also made an enormous impact in this field. When Lerner in 2009 published his book *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory*, he must have wanted to recall the title of Steven North's influential essay, but, as Peter Carino high-spiritedly noted in 2010 in the review of his book, Lerner had a much larger agenda than North. In his review of North's book, Carino compares the work of two researchers arguing that, to North, the writing center was primarily just a place on a campus where students could talk with sympathetic listeners about their writing, while Lerner's

concept of a writing laboratory embraces a method, rather than a place (Carino, 2010, p. 124). Carino notices that in Lerner's book the term laboratory has been successfully revived in the context of writing and linked again to its "rightful historical place" in science teaching, or to any kind of teaching in which students should perform the tasks of a discipline rather than just master the material of the subject matter.

The Idea of a Writing Laboratory is a book about teaching and writing, or, rather, about learning to write in ways that seek to transform both: teachers and students, as Lerner states himself in his introduction. Trying to trace the impressive history of writing instruction in American higher education, Lerner argues that the method of the lab (seen as experimental or hands-on student activity!) is essential to the very process of learning how to write. Examining successes and failures of case studies of various individual writing programs and reform initiatives, Lerner offers abundant evidence that education history continues to repeat itself, and instead of a clearly identified "march of progress", all reforms tend to be more of ongoing struggles, offering enlightened (but expensive) methods against efficient (but ineffective) means (Carino, 2010, p. 126). For Lerner, clearly, that "enlightened" approach is "the laboratory method", which provides a form of "situated learning". He identifies several relevant elements essential for the success of such a method: peer interaction, multiple drafts, repeated feedback, one-to-one instruction, and creative assignments, which provide numerous possibilities to students to address topics and issues of their interest, rather than those topics on which, being artificially invented, students do not have anything "to say about". Traditional methods, evidently opposed to this, according to Lerner, include classroom lectures on principles of writing, abstract knowledge of those principles, mode-driven assignments, and obsession with grammatical correctness. Aside from the fact, duly noted by Carino in his review of the book, that even the model laboratory writing courses do contain some prescriptive (hence, traditional!) elements to guide the students, North's book *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory* invites readers (writing center workers, teachers, students, composition scholars...) to discover what really works in teaching and learning to write. As Lerner's publisher rightfully repeated at the end of the book review, Lerner believes that "teaching writing as an experiment in what is possible, as a way of offering meaning-making opportunities for students no matter the subject matter, is an endeavor worth the struggle" (Lerner, 2009, pp. 196-7).

1.4. Writing at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Rochester, NY

Rochester Institute of Technology, an American private university founded in 1829, is often recognized as one of the Northeast's premier technical universities. RIT provides a wide range of academic opportunities, including a leading research program and an internationally recognized education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. RIT has

nine colleges, and in the wide variety of academic programs from Game Design and Development to Journalism and to Economics, the most popular majors are Computer and Information Sciences, Engineering, Visual and Performing Arts, Engineering Technologies, and Business/Marketing. Apart from the main campus in Rochester, New York, RIT has four international campuses in China, Croatia, Dubai, and Kosovo with over 19,000 students and more than 135,000 graduates from 49 states and over 100 nations.

The most recent website of the University Writing Program (UWP) at Rochester Institute of Technology (<https://www.rit.edu/writing/about>) offers a useful insight into the structure and organization of the writing program offered at this institution providing, at the same time, information about the current policies and activities of the program. Among other relevant information, this website offers a detailed overview of principles, threshold concepts and goals of the writing program at RIT. It is an extremely useful source designed to do both: teach and support students from the first year on into graduate studies, as well as to be a valid resource for faculty who wish to teach writing intensive courses throughout the curriculum. According to the information on the website, the UWP is grounded in rhetoric and composition studies, an academic field devoted to college-level instruction of student reading, writing, and interdisciplinary literacies. Its curriculum is built on five foundational assumptions (called *threshold concepts*) that reflect essential disciplinary knowledge about the learning processes of student writers. These concepts emphasize research and inquiry, the rhetorical nature of meaning making, genre awareness, identity and power, and revision and reflection. Through these threshold concepts, the UWP supports students as they develop their new orientations to writing. Even though this program is not mandatory, faculty members can choose to withhold grades in specific assignments if students' writings need revision and/or editing. Writing Center consultations are thus goal-oriented sessions that focus on the specific writing task or project, providing different types of assistance such as: supporting generating and developing ideas, reviewing assignments and instructor's feedback to help clarify expectations, providing insight in effective incorporation of outside sources, offering feedback on applications and similar personal documents, and providing revision and self-editing strategies.

The focus of UWP at RIT and Writing Centers is on developing personalized strategies that work for individual students and focus on the process of learning, and consultants are not merely "fixing" papers and offering proofreading or editing service but teaching students how to take an active role by asking questions and reflecting with the consultant. While grammar, language usage and patterns of error are discussed during the process of revision, students are encouraged and taught to look beyond grammar and proofreading by focusing on higher-order concerns, such as structure, organization, logical reasoning, and style.

1.5. Writing Lab at RIT Croatia (Dubrovnik)

RIT Croatia is one of the global campuses of RIT with two campuses: in Dubrovnik and in Zagreb. RIT Croatia currently offers three undergraduate degree programs in English: Bachelor of Science in *Hospitality and Tourism Management*, in *Information Technology: Web and Mobile Design* and in *Business Administration: International Business*, and two graduate programs: Master of Science in *Service Leadership and Innovation* and Master of Science in *Information Sciences and Technologies*. As an international campus of its founder institution Rochester Institute of Technology, RIT Croatia has also launched a *Writing across the Curriculum* initiative, which focuses on the importance of implementation of good writing skills across the curriculum and in all the programs delivered at RIT Croatia. The main goal of this initiative is not only to master a set of writing conventions but also to gain more comprehensive understanding of subject knowledge. RIT students are thus required to take at least one “writing intensive” (WI) course per year in any undergraduate program offered at all campuses. All WI courses have clearly writing-related learning outcomes, and a minimum of 20% of the grade in a WI course is based on formal writing. Some of the most important learning outcomes that are integrated in course syllabi of WI courses are using writing as a tool to discover ideas, demonstrating proficiency in disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course and identifying discipline-specific ways of writing.

Writing Lab at RIT Croatia provides online and live support helping undergraduate students become better writers. While writing centers in the U.S. generally promote tutoring policies for native speakers that are intended to help students improve their writing skills through minimal intervention and a reliance on student intuition as a native speaker, Writing Lab at RIT Croatia also offers writing support to non-native speakers (L2 writers) who may lack native-speaker intuitions about American culture or language. Because of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it is evident that international and multilingual students possess unique language learning needs that need to be addressed in order to help them be better integrated in a FL academic surrounding.

The purpose of this research is to identify the type of support in writing most needed by students at RIT Croatia in Dubrovnik as well as to analyze if students’ needs are more a matter of higher-order language concerns (audience, genre, use of sources) or lower-order language concerns (grammar, editing, formatting). The research is also attempting to assess the students’ current experience with the Writing Lab at RIT Croatia in Dubrovnik.

2. Methods

In an attempt to understand better and, at the same time, identify the kind of writing assistance the students of RIT Croatia in Dubrovnik need a Writing Skills Questionnaire was created and distributed in the Spring Semester of 2020/21 academic year. The WSQ was distributed in person, in pencil-paper format, to students of all year levels, during their final exams in the Spring Semester of 2022 (May 4-10). Incomplete and otherwise invalid questionnaires were excluded from analysis.

The first part of the questionnaire (the self-assessment) includes questions related to the type of help and/or assistance students believe they need in writing, their level of familiarity with RIT Croatia Writing Lab, and their understanding of the importance of writing in their professional and academic endeavors. The students were asked to indicate their level of agreement related to the self-assessment of their writing skills with Likert-type statements and questions and a continuum of five possible responses, i.e., five-point Likert-type response categories were used yet presented as a visual analogue scale (to approximate an interval-scale level).

The second part of the questionnaire includes the group of questions the purpose of which is to analyze the students' level of recognition of the importance of writing skills, utilizing, again, a five-point Likert response based visual analogue scale.

The third part of the questionnaire required participants to report their level of familiarity with the services of Writing Lab in Dubrovnik. The participants are also asked to choose which of the statements best describes the reason why they attended the WL and encouraged to circle all reasons that were applicable in their cases, or to state another reason if the existing statements were not applicable.

The fourth part of the questionnaire offers relevant demographic data in the categories of gender, grade level, degree program, GPA (Grade Point Average). At the end of the survey the participants are asked to identify if they are native English speakers or not and are given the possibility to add additional comments or suggestions related to the topic of the questionnaire.

3. Results

The Table 1 summarizes the most important demographic data on the participants in the survey. With incomplete surveys, and otherwise invalid questionnaires (e.g., multiple answers marked, etc.) excluded, a total of 80 questionnaires was included in the analysis. Out of 80 participants, 34 (42.5%) were male, and 46 female (57.5%). Only 8 participants were native English speakers. The participants were almost equally distributed per first three years of study (Freshmen 31.3%, Sophomore 32.5%, Junior 30%), while the lowest

percentage of participants were Senior students (only 5 of them, or 6.3%), due to lower numbers of final exams delivered in the final week to Senior students.

The frequency of usage of WL was also included in this table for better presentation and analysis purposes. The results thus show that out of 80 participants, 15% of them never attended Writing Lab, but the data also shows that out of those who attended Writing Lab the highest percentage (41%) used WL service more than three times.

Analyzing the reasons for attending WL, 49 RIT students used the services of WL because this was recommended to them by the faculty (61.3%). On the other hand, a significant number of students also realized on their own that they needed help and asked for it without prior recommendation from their professors (31 students or 38.8%). 17 students (21.3%) were “forced” to use WL services because their grade was withheld (mostly by professors teaching courses Sain in humanities and general education, such as Critical Reading and Writing).

There does not seem to be any significant difference in results regarding GPA (which is rather odd since it would be safe to assume that students with lower GPA would require more assistance in writing). It does seem that higher level students (Junior and Senior students) realize more the need to learn to write in a formal style than their younger peers (Freshmen and Sophomore students).

Table 1. Respondent’s characteristics and WL variables

	N	%
Gender		
Male	34	42.5
Female	46	57.5
Native English speaker		
Yes	8	10
No	71	88.8
Year level		
Freshmen	25	31.3
Sophomore	26	32.5
Junior	24	30.0
Senior	5	6.3
Frequency of Usage of WL		
Never	12	15
Once	18	22.5

	N	%
Two or Three Times	17	21.3
More than three times	33	41.3
Used WL because the grade was withheld		
No	63	78.8
Yes	17	21.3
Used WL on personal initiative		
No	49	61.3
Yes	31	38.8
Used WL because of professor’s recommendation		
No	74	92.5
Yes		7.5

Note: Some categories are suppressed, based on the results, for presentation and analysis purposes

The most interesting data in the survey reveals information in the section of self-assessment where students were asked to identify the type of help and/or assistance they believed they needed in writing. The Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for respondent's self-assessment items. The table represents data for five-point Likert type responses represented on a visual analogue scale (in which 1 stood for strongest disagreement and 5 for strongest agreement with the respective statement).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for respondent's self-assessment items

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe I need some help with understanding assignment instructions.	3.68	1.111
I believe I need some help with understanding assigned readings.	3.43	1.209
I believe I need some help with learning techniques for editing and self-proofreading.	3.04	1.141
I believe I need some help with basic grammar in my writing.	3.00	1.378
I believe I need some help with sentence structure and punctuation.	2.61	1.206
I believe I need some help with conducting research.	2.60	1.132
I believe I need some help with planning, drafting, and outlining.	2.55	1.090
I believe I need some help with vocabulary and/or word-choice.	2.50	1.201
I believe I need some help with formatting citations and integrating evidence and quotations.	2.44	1.146
I believe I need some help with learning to write in a more formal and professional style.	2.39	1.097

The respondents reported needing help with assignment instructions ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.11$) and assigned readings ($M=3.43$, $SD=1.21$) the most, and a lesser need for help in terms of citations and quotations ($M=2.44$, $SD=1.15$), or writing in a more formal and professional style ($M=2.39$, $SD=1.10$).

Given the writing lab services, reported scores regarding need for help with basic grammar and writing ($M=3.00$, $SD=1.38$), and help with vocabulary and word-choice ($M=2.50$, $SD=1.2$) were surprisingly low.

Based on the results, it can also be concluded that the students who participated in the survey seem to be rather sure of their language performances, and they do not believe that they need a lot of help or writing assistance. Very few of the participants acknowledge the need and the desire to improve their writing skills ($M=1.84$, $SD=.787$). In the same way, very few participants of them really realize how important writing skills might be for their professional careers ($M=1.65$, $SD=.858$) or if they could benefit from help and/or assistance of a qualified professor ($M=2.09$, $SD=.903$) (See Table 3,

Descriptive statistics for the respondent's perception of WL, again Likert type responses presented on a visual analogue scale in which 5 stood for highest level of agreement).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for respondent's perception of WL

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I want to get help with writing from a qualified professor.	2.09	.903
I want to improve my writing skills.	1.84	.787
Writing skills will be important in my professional career.	1.65	.858

In terms of the results presented, no effect was detected for year level, or other categorical items, except for the effect of gender on two items, as presented in Table 4. Male students ($M=2.09$, $SD=.83$) appear to be more interested to improve their writing skills than their female colleagues ($M=1.65$, $SD=.71$), and they are also more familiar with the existence of Writing Lab in general ($M=2.29$, $SD=1.14$) than their female counterparts ($M=1.83$, $SD=.93$).

Table 4. Differences between genders

Items	Male		Female		t*
	M	SD	M	SD	
I want to improve my writing skills.	2.09	.83	1.65	.71	2.47*
I am familiar with the services of RIT Croatia Writing Lab in Dubrovnik.	2.29	1.14	1.83	.93	1.96*

* $p<.05$

4. Discussion and conclusions

One of the skills employers today look for most is the ability to analyze data and articulate clear and meaningful conclusions based on that data. Among the benefits of having strong writing skills at work are the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with colleagues and clients, the ability to appear professional in emails and other written documents, and the ability to ensure quality in external or client focused presentations and materials. Business professionals must pay attention to style, tone, clarity, and logic, as well as to avoid poor word choice and poor grammar, which is considered as extremely rude and disrespectful in a professional environment. Therefore, irrespective of their field of study, students need to become more aware of the need to improve their writing skills, and this need should be embedded in their education. The data obtained in this survey reveal some important facts that the author wants to use as the basis for

future research. The data show that students, without adequate assistance and support of language professionals, cannot properly evaluate the type of writing assistance they need. While most participants in the survey readily acknowledged the fact that they needed help in understanding reading materials and assignment instructions, they were not equally sure that they needed help with vocabulary, which clearly is a paradox. On the other hand, the author finds very indicative that those students, who did ask for help and assistance in the Writing Lab, used this service repeatedly, and more frequently.

Existing RIT University Writing Program integrates already substantial and sequenced instruction in writing across all programs and all colleges that are part of RIT. Students of writing-intensive courses are supposed to receive feedback from their instructors about their writing and are expected to use that feedback to complete substantive revision of their work. Since this type of feedback can also be supplemented by peer mentors and/or writing center instructors, the author of this paper strongly believes that all faculty members should be more involved in the process of identifying students who lack writing skills. Encouraging those students to ask for professional help in writing by writing center staff will ensure that students complete their education with adequate writing competencies that will serve them in their professional careers and their lives as global citizens. The research has confirmed that the process of writing should never be viewed only as a need to master a set of conventions, but as a natural part of the students' need to gain more profound understanding of subject knowledge. The author believes that the Writing Lab at RIT will continue to have an important role in providing writing support to students to become more confident, inventive, and professionally dynamic writers.

References

- Boquet, E. H., & Lerner, N. (2008). Reconsiderations: After "the idea of a writing center". *College English*, 71(2), 170-189.
- Carino, P. (2010). Review of *The Idea of a Writing Laboratory*, by N. Lerner. *The Writing Center Journal*, 30(2), 124-128.
- Lerner, N. (2009). *The idea of a writing laboratory*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Molina Latera, V. (2017). The History of US Writing Centers and the Emergence of Writing Centers in Latin America: An Interview with Neal Lerner. *Praxis*, 14(2), 3. [https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/61950/molina-natera_FINALPDF\[1\].pdf?sequence=2](https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/61950/molina-natera_FINALPDF[1].pdf?sequence=2)
- Murphy, C., & Law, J. (1995). *Landmark Essays on Writing Centers*. Davis, CA: Hermagoras.
- Review of *Landmark Essays on Writing Centers*, by C. Murphy & J. Law. (1996). *College Composition and Communication*, 47(3), 439-440.
- North, S. M. (1984). The Idea of a Writing Center. *College English*, 46(5), 433-446.
- North, S. M. (1994). Revisiting "The Idea of a Writing Center." *The Writing Center Journal*, 15(1), 7-19. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43442606>

PODUČAVANJE FORMALNOGA I AKADEMSKOGA PISANJA NA RIT CROATIA: STUDIJA SLUČAJA

Jedna od vještina koju poslodavci danas najviše traže je sposobnost analize podataka i artikuliranja jasnih i smislenih zaključaka na temelju tih podataka. Posjedovanje dobrih sposobnosti pismenoga izražavanja na radnome mjestu uključuje sposobnost jasne i učinkovite komunikacije s kolegama i klijentima, profesionalnost u pisanju elektroničkih poruka i drugih pisanih poslovnih dokumenata, te sposobnost osiguravanja kvalitete u eksternim prezentacijama i pisanim materijalima usmjerenim na klijenta. Kandidati koji mogu pronaći kreativne načine za objašnjenje svojih stavova kao i potkrijepiti svoje ideje čvrstim dokazima, korisni su u gotovo svakome odjelu. Štoviše, sposobnost jasne komunikacije, unutar i izvan organizacije, unutar parametara prihvaćenoga tržišnog brendiranja i filozofije tvrtke, znači dosljednu i profesionalnu razmjenu poruka, što je postalo jedna od najtraženijih osobina zaposlenika u današnjem poslovanju. Kako bi svojim studentima pomogla da zadrže ove vještine i proširila fokus na pisanje tijekom sve četiri godine studija, visokoškolska ustanova RIT Croatia je pokrenula inicijativu kojom se vještine pisanja uključuju kao neophodni ciljevi tijekom svih godina studija. U skladu s ovom inicijativom na pisanje se ne gleda samo kao na potrebu za svladavanjem zadanoga skupa konvencija i normi, nego kao na prirodan dio potrebe učenika za temeljitijim razumijevanjem predmetnoga znanja. Writing Lab je centar za podršku u akademskom pisanju koji pruža podršku studentima dodiplomskih studija kako bi imali više samopouzdanja u pisanju, te istovremeno bili inventivniji i dinamičniji u profesionalnoj pismenoj komunikaciji. Svrha ovoga rada je identificirati vrstu podrške koja je studentima svih godina studija najviše potrebna kao i analizirati kojemu tipu jezičnih problema pripadaju njihove potrebe za podrškom: problemima više razine (odabir čitatelja, žanra, ili navođenje izvora) ili niže razine (gramatika, pravopis, oblikovanje teksta).

Ključne riječi: podučavanje vještine poslovnoga pisanja, poslovna komunikacija, centar za pisanje, formalno pisanje