

Center for Writing Excellence
Fall 2010- Summer 2011 Academic Year Report
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Mission & Programs

The UNA Center for Writing Excellence has a three-fold mission: to provide UNA students at all academic levels with instruction and resources for writing, reading, and writing-as-critical thinking skills development; to provide UNA faculty with teaching resource support and professional development opportunities in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID); and to facilitate and develop community-oriented writing, reading, and writing-as-critical thinking programs.

The above mission is accomplished through a collection of programs categorized into three areas:

1. University Writing Center
 - a. Individual and Group Consultations, conducted face-to-face or online
 - b. Classroom Presentations and Workshops
2. Faculty Professional Development
 - a. Individual, Group, Departmental, College, or University-level Presentations and Workshops
 - b. Faculty Writing Retreats
3. Community Programs
 - a. Florence-Lauderdale Public Library Writing Group

University Writing Center

The primary activity of the University Writing Center is to conduct writing consultations: one-to-one or group interactions between a consultant and a client or clients, conducted in the center or online. Clients may, and often do, participate in multiple consultations throughout a semester, year, or across years.

Who uses the University Writing Center, and how is it used?

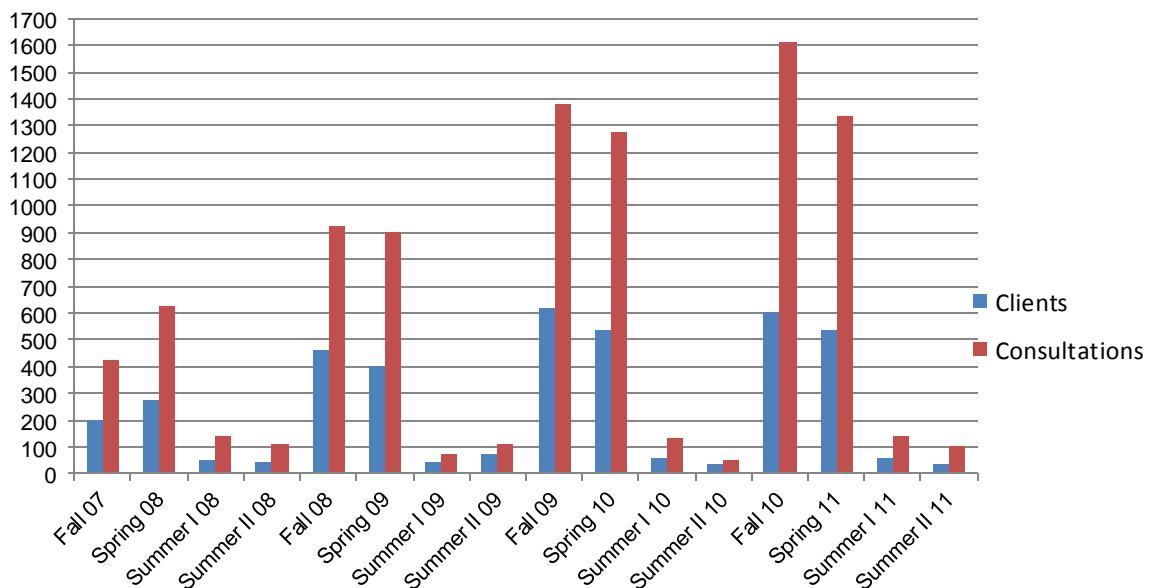


Figure 1: Individual Clients and Consultations by Semester

Table 1. Percentage Change in Clients from Prior Year, 2007-present

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Fall	128.85	33.55	-1.78
Spring	48.72	32.76	-.56
Summer I	-11.54	32.61	-1.64
Summer II	79.07	-51.95	5.41

Table 2. Percentage Change in Consultations from Prior Year, 2007-present

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Fall	115.89	49.24	16.9
Spring	44.8	41.1	4.46
Summer I	-48.92	87.32	5.26
Summer II	-2.68	-53.21	109.8

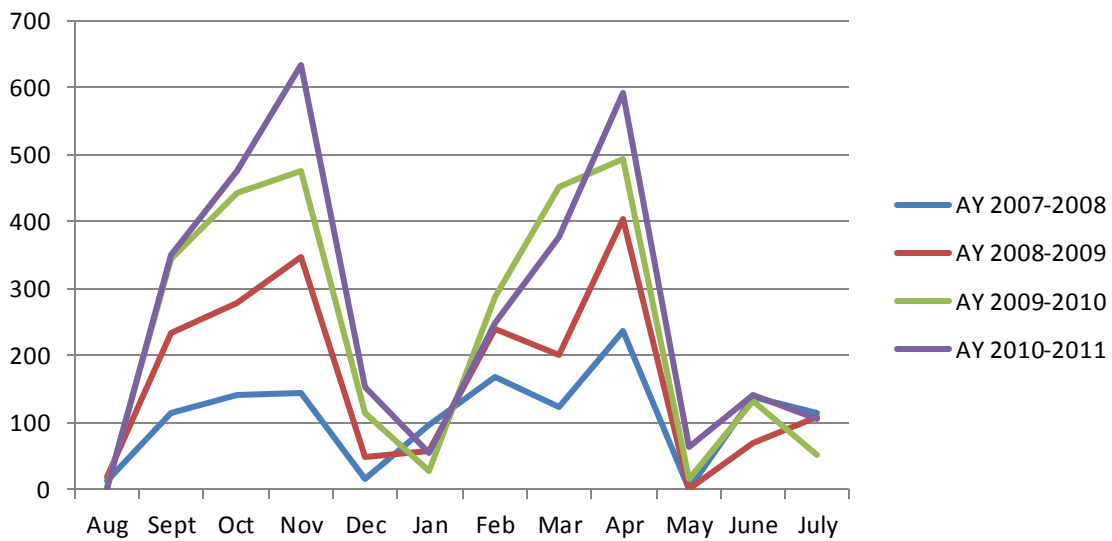


Figure 2: Consultations by Month



Figure 3: Use Rates by Month (%)

The evidence is beginning to suggest that, given the current resources, both clients and consultations are beginning to plateau during the academic year. The Center welcomes between 500-650 clients for 1300-1600 consultations each semester.

Summer numbers continue to fluctuate wildly, largely contingent upon Summer staffing for Liberal Arts writing courses. Faculty with training and background in professional writing tend to emphasize writing center use substantially more than other Liberal Arts writing faculty.

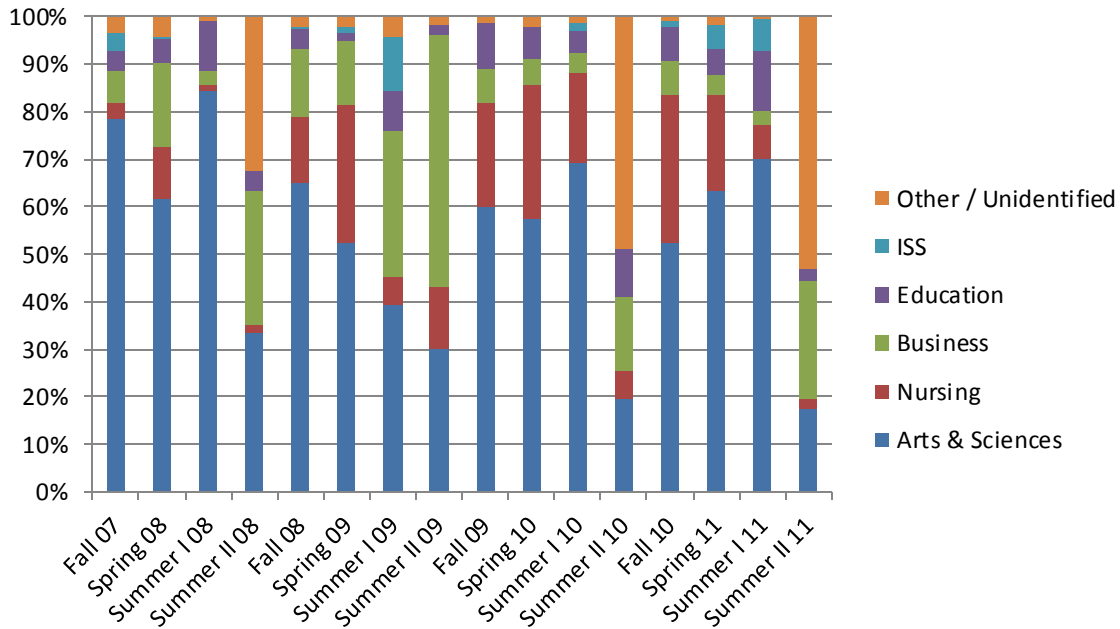


Figure 4: Consultations by College

The high level of “Other” tutorials in each Summer II session is comprised of Presidential Mentors Academy consultations. Although the their primary course has an NU prefix, it is interdisciplinary and does not count toward the Nursing degree.

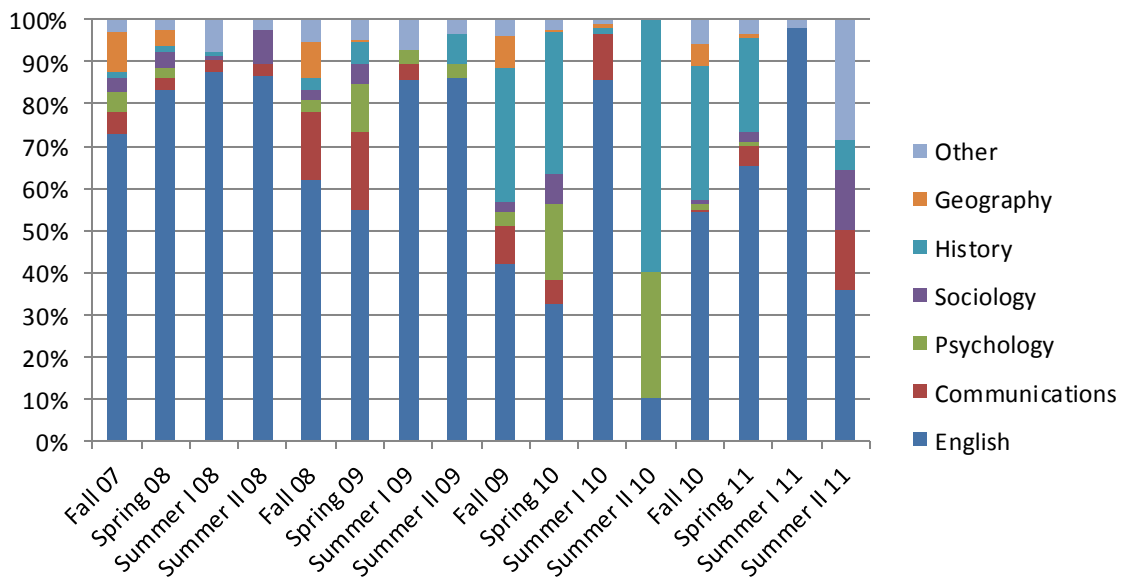


Figure 5: Consultations by Discipline in the College of Arts & Sciences

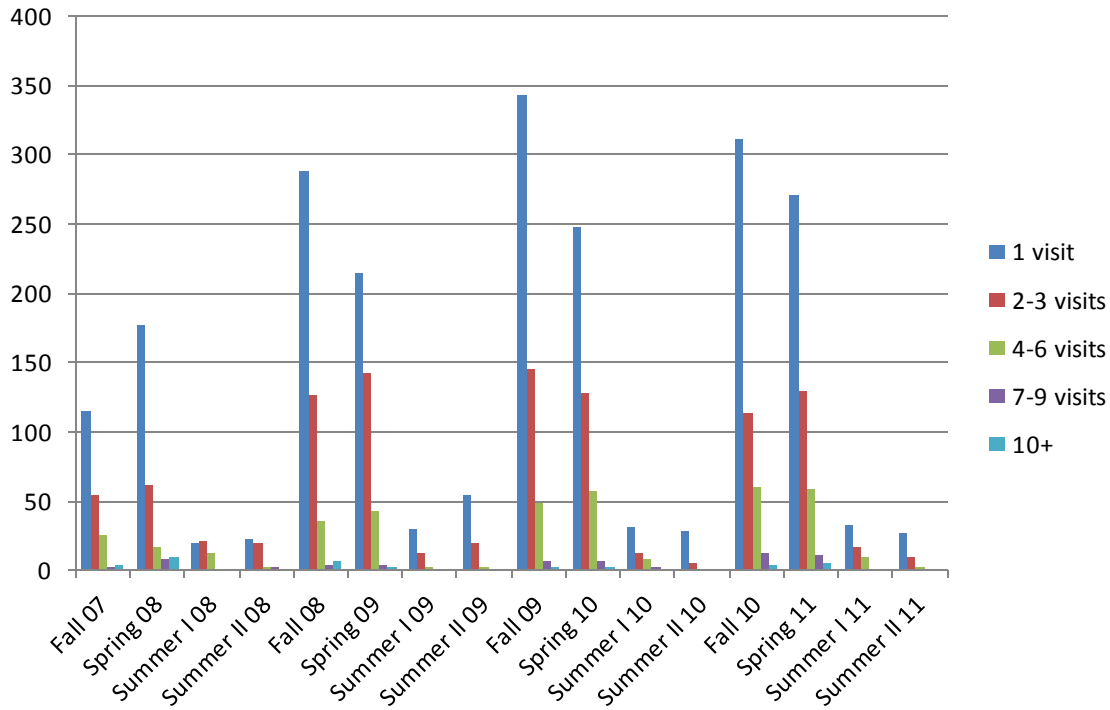


Figure 6: Clients by Number of Tutorial Visits

While the number of clients who visit one-time is decreasing, the number of multiple visit clients is increasing, especially in the 4-6 visit range. This is generally a positive indicator that the writing center is making a positive impact, especially since the center advocates a three-visit policy among faculty who require or expect students to attend consultations.

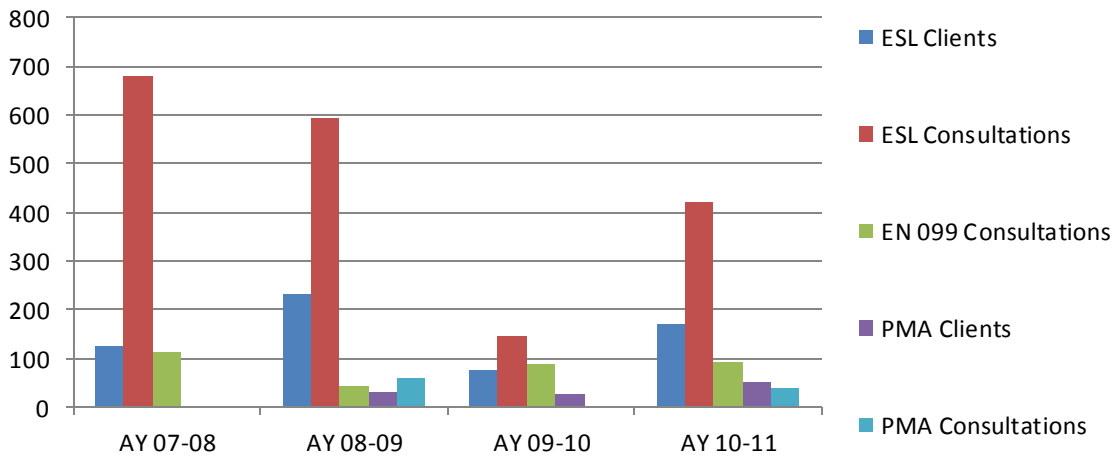


Figure 7. University Retention Data

ESL clients and consultations have rebounded from the prior academic year, following presentations and conversations with instructors in ESL. English 099 consultation levels have stayed the same. Clients with Presidential Mentors Academy affiliations have increased, although only consultations related to PMA Summer II courses can be readily tracked with the current software.

Consultation Evaluations

Clients of the University Writing Center have the option of providing an evaluation of their experience via an electronic survey. From Fall 2007 through Summer II 2009, clients were asked to submit paper evaluations. These resulted in unusually high, yet unusually positive overall evaluations.

Since the institution of electronic surveys, the sample size has declined dramatically, although comments are much more candid than when evaluations were completed in the center. The extremely low sample size renders these evaluations useless for making general statements about writing center quality, atmosphere, and service, although they retain value for individual consultant training and evaluation purposes.

Clients are invited on the writing center website and in writing center orientations to provide the director with feedback on center quality, atmosphere, and service. On the rare occasions when criticism has been submitted, the center staff has worked to clarify misunderstandings and improve office practices and communications policies and strategies.

Consultation Cost Per Semester

The cost of a consultation each semester may be estimated using the formulas described below.

Academic Year (Fall and Spring):

$(\text{Consultant Wages Per Semester} + 3/8 \text{ Director Salary} + 2/5 \text{ CWE Non-Wage Budget}) / \# \text{ Consultations Per Semester} = \text{Approximate Consultation Cost Per Semester}$

Summer I & II (combined):

$(\text{Consultant Wages for Summer} + \text{Director Summer Pay} + 1/5 \text{ CWE Non-Wage Budget}) / \# \text{ Consultations Per Semester} = \text{Approximate Consultation Cost During Summer}$

Table 3. Approximate Cost Per Consultation

Term	Consultant Wages	Director Pay	CWE Budget	Consultations	Cost
Fall 2007	5,519.86	20,930.25	2,107.60	428	66.73
Spring 2008	3,941.44	20,930.25	2,107.60	625	43.17
Summer 2008	1,333.80	11,142.00	1,053.80	251	53.91
Fall 2008	8,656.35	21,225.75	909.51	924	33.33
Spring 2009	9,057.01	21,225.75	909.51	905	34.47
Summer 2009	1,820.90	11,320.40	454.75	180	75.54
Fall 2009	6,655.50	21,225.75	1,748.00	1379	21.49
Spring 2010	10,168.13	21,225.75	1,748.00	1277	25.96
Summer 2010	2,189.50	11,320.40	874.00	184	78.18
Fall 2010	10,860.50	21,521.25	1,502.21	1612	21.02
Spring 2011	10,418.25	21,521.25	1,502.21	1334	25.07
Summer 2011	2,146.00	11,478.00	751.11	247	58.20

The table clearly shows that the cost per consultation is significantly lower in the academic year, as opposed to the summer, and that the academic year cost has decreased each year. In order to reduce the cost of summer consultations, more advertising and more use is required. This will involve identifying and meeting with faculty who are assigned summer classes before the session begins, and encouraging them to build the center and its resources into their courses.

Workshops

Workshops continue to be a popular component of writing center services, reaching 52 classes and over 1,200 students in the 2010-2011 Academic Year. The most popular requests continue to be writing center orientations, workshops in APA style, overviews of academic essay structure, scientific method overviews, and strategies for collaborative writing.

Table 4 lists faculty and courses that integrate writing center workshops and support each year. This is not an all-inclusive list of clients, but these faculty nearly always place workshop requests or insist upon mandatory consultations.

Table 4. Instructors and Courses with Recurring Writing Center Workshops

Professor	Course
Prof. B. Huddleston	COM 303: Research Methodologies in Communication
Prof. F. Harris	ED 292: Pre-professional Seminar
Dr. N. Mauriello	EN 112: First-Year Composition II
Dr. M. Pretes	GE 300: History & Philosophy in Geography
Dr. J. Bibbee	HI 101: World Civilization to 1500
Prof. C. Blackburn	IEP 200: Intensive English Program (Grammar, Reading, etc.)
Prof. Z. Ayasli	
Prof. A. Cook	
Prof. R. Lee	
Various Instructors	LC 100: Learning Community
Dr. J. Beaver	MG 382: Managerial Communications
Dr. E. Davis	NU 200: Introduction to Nursing
Prof. J. Sorrell	NU 200: introduction to Nursing (Online)
Dr. L. Williams	NU 302: Community Health Nursing
Dr. M. Lee	NU 406: Research in Nursing
Dr. J. Hodges	SW 370: Methods of Social Work Research II

Other workshops and mandatory consultations have been scheduled for the CIS, Criminal Justice, Health, Interdisciplinary Studies, Physical Education, & Recreation, Human & Environmental Science, and Psychology Departments. Increasing numbers of History faculty have also begun requesting workshops.

Orientation, Workshop, & Presentation Evaluations

Students are asked to evaluate workshops and presentations only (not orientations) using a paper evaluation form similar to that used for consultations. If an evaluation is not conducted for a workshop or presentation, it is usually for some practical reason, such as forgetting to bring forms, or running out of them. Evaluations from the past two academic years are provided in Figure 8. N equals the number of presentations/evaluations.

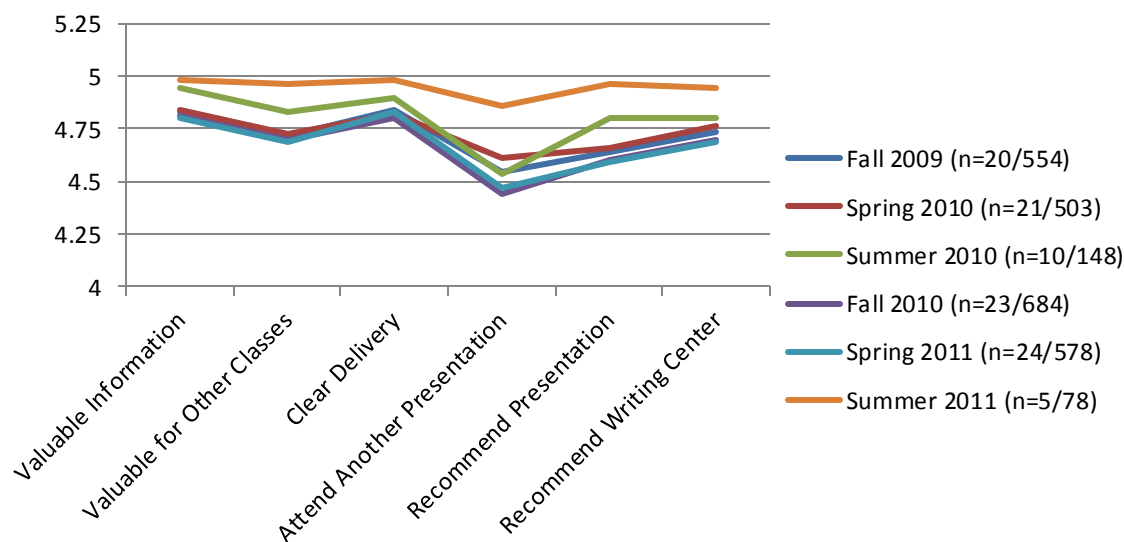


Figure 8. Workshop and Presentation Evaluations 2009-2011

Figure 8 illustrates a pair of ongoing problems with student learning. First, students perceive less of a connection between material for one course and its potential application to another course. Second, they accept that support is valuable, yet they admit that they would not seek out or participate in other workshops or presentations. These two issues are not likely limited to the Center for Writing Excellence; like the CWE Director and consultants, faculty and support staff across the university must find ways to address these problems.

Professional Development

The CWE has refocused its efforts from professional development in teaching to professional development in research, offering a one-week writing and research retreat each May, in conjunction with Collier Library and the Office of Academic Affairs. Dr. Robert Koch and Ms. Leigh Thompson, Instructional Librarian, provided research support.

Table 5. Faculty Writing Retreat Participants, 2011

	Name	Department
1	Bibbee, Jeffery	History
2	Blankenship, Lisa Anne	Biology
3	Carrasco, Gabriela	Psychology
4	Coleman-Reed, Freda	Social Work
5	Davis, Ernestine	Nursing
6	Harris, Felecia	Education
7	King, Michele (adjunct)	English
8	Kinnamon, Eric (adjunct)	Business
9	Kirch, Lisa	Art History
10	Kirkman, Tera	Nursing
11	Lee, Marilyn (Chair)	Nursing
12	Mauriello, Nick	English
13	McClellan, Eleanor	Music & Theatre
14	Sim, Sunhui	Geography
15	Williams, Yaschica	Criminal Justice

During this retreat, the 15 participants brainstormed and developed new project ideas; completed and submitted conference proposals; and reviewed, revised, and submitted articles for publication. The response to this opportunity was overwhelmingly positive, as evidenced by their evaluation scores (9 of 10 evaluations scored the program 5, with the only 4 coming from a participant's admitted distractions). A sample of their comments are provided:

"I enjoyed writing with others and reviewing daily goals."

"I'd like to see the groups meet periodically to encourage future research."

"[The least valuable aspect of the retreat was] it was not long enough."

"I organized my summer's writing goals and I cleared up the data for a complicated study."

"Great experience and opportunity – everything was valuable."

Community Programs

The CWE has limited resources and time to commit to the community component of its mission, so these have been directed toward relationships with Florence-Lauderdale Public Library. Although the prior two years saw a writing center begin at Florence High School, the program was discontinued when a shift in classroom expectations necessitated by No Child Left Behind requirements resulted in a decrease in the role of essay writing.

FLPL Creative Writing Workshops

Florence-Lauderdale Public Library Creative Writing Workshops meet biweekly, 5-6 times during a semester, and are conducted in Spring, Summer, and Fall. Instruction is volunteer, and there is no fee for participation. Expenditures are limited to notebooks, paper, pens, and photocopies. Attendance records since inception are provided below, including the Memoir Workshop that was part of the One Book Program during Fall 2008.

Semester	Registered Participants	Appeared on First Day	Completed Program	Returning Participants
Fall 2008	26	20	16	NA
Spring 2009	15	10	6	0
Summer 2009	5	2	2	NA
Fall 2009	20	12	6	2
Spring 2010	15	11	6	2
Fall 2010	15	10	7	3
Spring 2010	15	14	9	4
Fall 2010	14	17	10	7
Spring 2011	12	23	10	7

The Summer 2009 Workshop was oriented toward High School students, but the poor turnout led to the discontinuation of this focus. Afterward, the workshop was marketed toward beginning writers of all ages. Overall, participants have spoken well of the program, though no formal evaluations have been conducted. The numbers suggest that of the writers who appear on the first day, about half can be retained. The high number of new participants who visit suggest that there is a need for a forum that encourages new and aspiring writers to try their hand at the craft (most participants are middle aged adults or senior citizens), and the slowly but surely increasing number of returnees suggests success in promoting writing in the community.

Expenditures for this program have been in supplies only, totaling approximately \$350 over three years. All personnel hours are voluntary.