

# MEMORANDUM

September 25, 2006

TO: All ESL Faculty and Academic Advisors

FROM: Kristin

CC: Donna Miller-Parker

**SUBJECT: Students wanting to skip a level: READ AND UNDERSTAND  
Please!!**

Hi Everybody,

I hope you had a fabulous holiday! Once again, things are happening to necessitate giving this memo to you. If you know it by heart, good.....if not, then read this.

I will be receiving inquiries from many of you about students who want to skip a level of ESL. I am giving you the protocol, but first I want to say that skipping a level is discouraged in all cases except in the very exceptional instances.

Here is what a student must do:

- Contact his current teacher this quarter and express the wish to skip to the next level. The student's reading and writing needs to be assessed by your normal procedures first.
- The teacher often knows if the student is really a candidate for level skipping and can intervene at that point by telling the student that he/she really does not have the skills to skip to a higher level.
- *If the teacher really feels the student can possibly skip, the teacher needs to get another in-class writing from the student and give it to me. Make sure that the writing shows the student has some mastery of all the skills you will be covering from your level. For example, if you are teaching level 4 and your student wants to skip to level 5, your writing prompt must demand skills that students have to master for completing level 4.*
- Sometimes a teacher does not know what sort of writing to assign because he/she is new to teaching that level. Then the teacher will contact the department chairman or level lead for guidance on topics that will measure writing skills.
- Give the writing to me. Your department chairman will make the final determination *after* conferring with other teachers
- If the student shows mastery of the current level skills, then the student will be allowed to skip a level. This happens rarely.
- ***If the student is placed in a level from the placement test (hasn't been in any previous ESL classes here), then he/she approaches the teacher at the beginning of the quarter and the whole in-class essay process starts there.***

Many students try to do end-runs around this process, so be pretty hard-lined about the protocol. It's sad when a student skips a level then struggles academically because he/she didn't get the necessary skills. So let's not abuse this system and put it to good use only when really called for. Bottom line: you don't make the skipping decision; it's made by committee. That keeps the pressure off you and eases some potentially uncomfortable situations. Please ask any questions about this process that you need to.

Have a wonderful quarter and enjoy your students,

Kristin