

10 reasons I suck, as told to me by students



BRIGIT CALLAGHAN
CHICAGONOW

If you ever get tired of feeling confident and wish to cut yourself down a notch, stand in front of a room of teens and allow them to tell you how they really feel about your hair, clothes,

finger nails,

shoes and lesson-planning skills—or lack thereof.

Every day I receive unsolicited critiques on my appearance, personality or lifestyle. If I wear Adidas, they remind me New Balance is in. If I wear an extra bit of eyeliner, nearly every student will ask me why. It'd be easier to hold a press

conference and tell them all at once, "I don't know. I just did." Most of the time, teens are trying to show that they know what's cool and attractive and don't realize that what they're saying may be inappropriate or rude.

Here are 10 things my students have told me that translate to atomic insults:

1. "You look like someone from the Oscars. Did you watch the Oscars? Hmm ... oh! Jared Leto! Yes, you remind me of Jared Leto ... if you had a beard, of course."
OR IF I WERE A MAN, OF COURSE!
2. "Why don't your fingernails grow? They are always so short."
You're tracking my fingernail growth now?!
3. "We should call you 'headmaster' because it's more respectful than 'Mrs.'"

And you're totally a headmaster?"

Hmm ... not sure what that means.

4. "Don't wear purple anymore. It makes you look old."
Your face makes you look fat, so there.
5. "How old are you? 26? Ooooh, girl, you better start having babies NOW!"
Because I've surpassed teen motherhood, when I become a mother, clearly I will be considered as old as dirt.
6. "Do you listen to Taylor Swift and do yoga? I mean, you're white."
Psh. Yes, that one is true.
7. "My shoes cost more than your scarf!" as he condescendingly flings my scarf with his hand.
I should hope so, this scarf was \$10.99 at Target.
8. "Ain't you got no frizz control?"
This is my hair WITH frizz control.

9. "Do you even write lesson plans?"
Seriously? Do you even know what a lesson plan is?!

10. "Wow, you have more acne than the last time I saw you."
This was said by a kid who hadn't shown up to school in three weeks, and on a day when I had the clearest skin I've had since high school. Jerk!

Luckily, I have high self esteem and I hold the red pen. See you in summer school, kids!

BRIGIT CALLAGHAN WRITES A BLOG ABOUT HER FUNNY EXPERIENCES AS A 10TH GRADE ENGLISH TEACHER IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AS WELL AS HER OPINIONS ABOUT EDUCATION. READ MORE AT CHICAGONOW.COM/NAILS-ON-A-CHALKBOARD.

My twin, apparently. Not even my boy twin—just my twin.

GETTY IMAGES PHOTO



NEXT WEEK: ARE MUSIC FESTIVALS BECOMING TOO DANGEROUS? EMAIL US AT THEMASH@TRIBUNE.COM!

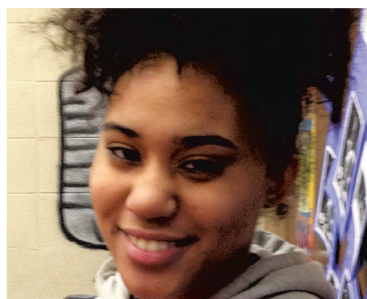
QUESTION OF THE WEEK

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO RIGHT NOW?



"I like '1996' by The Wombats right now."

—**TAYLOR JANCETIC**
JUNIOR, OSWEGO



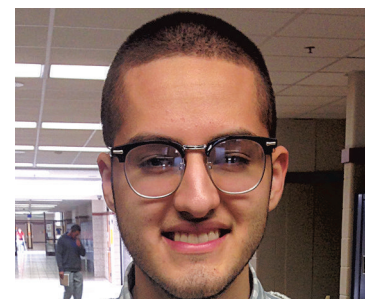
"'Outside,' Childish Gambino."

—**MINA WAIGHT**
JUNIOR, KENWOOD



"Right now, I'm loving 'Gold on the Ceiling' by The Black Keys."

—**EMILY WISNER**
SOPHOMORE, NEW TRIER



"I'm bumpin' that new Chuck Inglish album, 'Convertibles.' "

—**AMADOR ALEJANDRO SALINAS**
SENIOR, OSWEGO



"I'm listening to a group called The Piano Guys. They take famous classic songs and transform them into beautiful orchestral arrangements."

—**RENA MCCULLOUGH**
JUNIOR, RIVERSIDE BROOKFIELD

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

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