

Stand up to teachers, let student voices be heard

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“ Do you even have a voice?” Surprisingly, this condescending, mood altering question didn’t come from a freshman boy trying to get a reaction, but instead from a teacher who is supposed to be helping me learn. Adults, specifically teachers, need to be conscious of how they speak to students because they don’t always understand their situations outside of class. On the other hand, students should stand up to teachers when they feel as though they’re being put down unfairly.

For anyone that hasn’t interacted with me before, my supposedly “ nonexistent” voice is almost always accompanied with sweaty palms and averted eye contact, especially in front of a group or with someone I don’t know very well. Throughout my life, I’ve had trouble finding the confidence to speak at all, much less in a controlled way. To combat this, I consistently put myself in situations where I’m forced to speak. I’m on the speech team, where all we do is public speaking. I present at journalism conventions and try to answer questions in classes.

I don’t think that it’s right for an adult to judge my situation without knowing who I am, or even trying to figure it out. Docking points on presentations is one thing (I understood my C), but teachers should never have the right to act condescending about a weakness, whether it be lacking confidence or something more serious. If an adult is concerned, that’s different, but trying to make a joke of it or laughing about it is immature. It might seem like students have no control over how we are treated, but that is false. I wish that I had stood up for myself by saying something like, “ ask my regional speech medal” or “ ask the adults in my life who actually care to watch me grow.” In the future, I know that I won’t allow anyone, even someone in

control of my grade, to put me down in a way that I'm still thinking about days later.

I advise that other students don't put up with it either. Get your quippy comebacks ready. The majority of our faculty is supportive and the majority of our students are stellar at standing up for themselves and others, but I think we can all use the occasional reminder. We deserve to be respected by our educators, weaknesses, struggles, quiet voices and all.