

## Fashion Blues

Jill Carmer was the first student to walk into the classroom.

“Good morning, my flower,” Mr. El said as he finished writing the morning assignments on the board.

“Mr. El, I like your blue jeans. You look cool!” Jill said as she took her seat.

Tommy and Alex Howard, the twins, walked in. “Cool jeans, Mr. El,” Alex announced.

Soon the rest of the class was streaming in, and a chorus of similar comments could be heard.

“Thank you, thank you,” Mr. El said to the class. “I’m glad you guys like my new jeans. I wear Levi’s jeans almost every day and this is the first time anybody has even noticed.”

Angela Williams, the fashion expert of the class, raised her hand and spoke without waiting to be called on. “That’s because all the other jeans you wear are brown, black, green, tan, or gray.”

David Tyler waved both hands furiously until the teacher pointed at him. “You see, Mr. El, you’re wearing blue jeans, just like a real person.”

“Thank you, David” Mr. El responded and then addressed the entire class. “Does it really matter what colour denim jeans are? Think about it and we’ll discuss the matter later.”

Mr. El was pleased to find that no one was absent. This was that annoying day of the week when he had to get his kids to their gym class first thing in the morning.

The class walked down the long hallway to the gym with Mr. El at the end of the line. He opened the door to the faculty room as he watched the last child in line disappear into the gym. Miss Joan was the only person in the room.

“Mr. El, what kind of field trip are you taking?” she asked.

“What field trip?”

“You’re wearing jeans. Isn’t that a little unusual?”

“I wear jeans all the time. These just happen to be blue.”

At that moment, Mr Kay, the principal, walked into the room. He glanced at Mr. El who was still standing by the door. “Hmmm,” he said as he walked over to the refrigerator. He placed his brown paper lunch bag into it and walked back toward the door. “How are you people this morning?” he asked, and walked out before anyone could reply.

“Those are very nice jeans,” Miss Joan continued, “but aren’t they a little, shall we say, undignified for a professional position?” Before Mr. El could respond, she added, “Not that I mean to suggest that you ever are dignified.”

Mr. El smiled. “How come you haven’t made any comments all the other times I wore different color jeans?”

“I hadn’t noticed. Besides, they weren’t blue jeans.”

“They were the same brand, the same style, the same material. No one noticed, no one cared.”

Miss Joan sighed, “I get the feeling you’re trying to make some profound point.”

Mr. El sat down at the long table that practically went from one end of the room to the other. “My point,” he said, “is that humans are a strange species. They tend to put a lot of importance on unimportant differences.”

Miss Joan smiled. “That’s true,” she replied. “But there are times when you have to pretend to be a human if you want to live successfully among them.”



### To Write About or Discuss:

1. What was the same about the way Mr. El's students and Miss Joan reacted to the blue jeans?
2. What was different about the way Miss Joan and the students reacted?
3. Does it matter if jeans are blue instead of some other color? Should it matter?