

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Jessica Metzger	School:	Liberty High School
Book Title:	Speak	Genre:	Fiction/Young Adult
Author:	Laurie Halse Anderson	Pages:	198
Publisher:	Penguin	Copyright:	1999

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

From Penguin:

Melinda is a friendless outcast at Merryweather High. She busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, and now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. It is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and who is still a threat to her. It will take another violent encounter with him to make Melinda fight back. This time she refuses to be silent.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

Instructional Rationale:

This book is one of six novels selected to explore and examine how marginalized groups and/or individuals are represented in society. The selection of books for this unit allows students to view the world from the viewpoint of marginalized characters. We will be examining stereotypes and questioning how stereotypes are established and perpetuated. Students will be asked to propose solutions to stop stereotyping and call others to action against stereotyping. Students will work in literature circles as they read this novel. The reading will be done individually and students will meet in their groups to discuss their novel. Literature circles offer powerful benefits to readers of all ages. The circles are structured to move readers through a range of cognitive roles as they discuss books that are self-selected. Literature circles allow students to connect with each other, with texts, and ultimately, with the world in which they live. They learn to take responsibility as members of a group who, together, must construct meaning through discussion, debate and reflection. Discussion, debate and reflection are anchored in the text which serves as a springboard to explore social issues.

Connection to the state standards/OLSD curriculum map(s):

- Acquisition of Vocabulary (1)
- Reading Application Informational (5, 6)

- Reading Application Literary (7, 9, 10, 11)
- Writing Process (all)
- Writing Application (5, 7, 9)
- Writing Conventions (10)
- Research Standard (11)
- Communication Standard (13)

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Amazon.com

Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud: "My throat is always sore, my lips raw.... Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter or freeze.... It's like I have some kind of spastic laryngitis." What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute...

Laurie Halse Anderson's first novel is a stunning and sympathetic tribute to the teenage outcast. The triumphant ending, in which Melinda finds her voice, is cause for cheering (while many readers might also shed a tear or two). After reading *Speak*, it will be hard for any teen to look at the class scapegoat again without a measure of compassion and understanding for that person--who may be screaming beneath the silence. (Ages 13 and older) --Jennifer Hubert --

Review #2

(Amazon.com) From Publishers Weekly

In a stunning first novel, Anderson uses keen observations and vivid imagery to pull readers into the head of an isolated teenager. Divided into the four marking periods of an academic year, the novel, narrated by Melinda Sordino, begins on her first day as a high school freshman. No one will sit with Melinda on the bus. At school, students call her names and harass her; her best friends from junior high scatter to different cliques and abandon her. Yet Anderson infuses the narrative with a wit that sustains the heroine through her pain and holds readers' empathy. A girl at a school pep rally offers an explanation of the heroine's pariah status when she confronts Melinda about calling the police at a summer party, resulting in several arrests. But readers do not learn why Melinda made the call until much later: a popular senior raped her that night and, because of her trauma, she barely speaks at all. Only through her work in art class, and with the support of a compassionate teacher there, does she begin to reach out to others and eventually find her voice. Through the first-person narration, the author makes Melinda's pain palpable: "I stand in the center aisle of the auditorium, a wounded zebra in a National Geographic special." Though the symbolism is sometimes heavy-handed, it is effective. The ending, in which her attacker comes after her once more, is the only part of the plot that feels forced. But the book's overall gritty realism and Melinda's hard-won metamorphosis will leave readers touched and inspired. Ages 12-up. (Oct.)

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What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **Prom**

Author: **Anderson, L.**

Title: **Uglies**

Author: **Westerfeld, S.**

Title: **Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes**

Author: **Crutcher, C.**

Title:
Title:
Title:

Author:
Author:
Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Contains passages that refer to a violent sexual act (rape). However, there is no graphic sexual content. Melinda, the main character in Speak, goes through emotional struggles as a result of the rape.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable):

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 8/21/2007

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults