

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Gambill Grade: 9 School: Olentangy High School

Book Title: Speak Genre: YA Fiction

Author: Laurie Halse Anderson Pages: 197

Publisher: Penguin Putnam Inc. 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.)

Overview

Melinda Sordino suffers through her freshman year at Merryweather High School in silence. Her transition from middle school to high school is complicated by a misunderstanding which sends Shockwaves throughout her existence.

Gradually, readers become aware that Melinda is spiraling out of control as she becomes mute and loses interest in herself, her family, and school. Abandoned by her friends, she yearns to confide in them. Her voice is presented through a subdued inner monologue which becomes stronger and louder as Melinda struggles to reveal the truth behind her action to call for help at a summer party. Ostracized because her classmates believe she betrayed their trust, Melinda expresses herself through an art project and gardening. She ultimately confronts her antagonist and begins to heal.

Book Rags

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)

10AVA, 10AVC, 10RAIB, 10RALB, 10RALF, 10RALA,, 12RALA, 10RALF,

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

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.)

Review #2

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 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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

Title: Diary of Anne Frank Author: Frank

Title: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Author: Mark Twain

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

profanity, mature content, 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:

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