Student 1 = **Accepted**

Mrs. Muldoon

Period 2

31 Jan 2015

IWA #1: Speak Up!

Melinda Sordino, the main character in Laurie Halse Anderson’s novel *Speak*, struggles with the aftermath of a sexual assault while she tries to figure out who she is during her freshman year of high school. Initially Melinda is depressed and sees herself as having “two muddy-circle eyes under black-dash eyebrows, piggy-nose nostrils, and a chewed-up horror of a mouth.” She declares herself an “outcast” since her friends no longer speak to her. Eventually, with the help of her art teacher Mr. Freeman, Melinda learns to express her feelings through drawings, carvings, and sculptures of trees. Finally, she speaks out when she screams “loud enough to make the whole school crumble” as she fights off Andy when he tries to attack her for the second time. This change Melinda experienced as she grew stronger and confident enough to speak up for herself makes her a dynamic character.

From observing Melinda’s self discovery, readers learn the importance of speaking up for themselves; it’s important to ask others for help and to voice concerns. When Melinda kept her pain hidden from others, she felt isolated, misunderstood, lost, and scared, which led her to skip school since she no longer felt connected to anyone there. When Ivy showed Melinda the bathroom stall, where other girls had written similar comments about Andy such as “He’s a creep” and “Stay away!!!!!” Melinda realizes she isn’t alone and that what happened to her may have happened to others too. Thankfully through the kindness of Ivy, Nicole, David, and Mr. Freeman, Melinda slowly starts to open up about the trauma she endured. Readers are left assuming Melinda will finally open up to Mr. Freeman and tell an adult, which will hopefully start her on a path toward healing.

Student 2 = **Revise**

Mrs. Muldoon

Period 2

31 Jan 2015

IWA #1: Speaking

In “Speak” by Laurie Halse Anderson, Melinda is forced to recover from a traumatic event. She struggles to figure out who she is and becomes depressed since her friends will no longer speak to her. Melinda even views herself as an “outcast” and repeats this word often. Mr. Freeman, her art teacher assigns her to create a tree that speaks and through this project, Melinda is able to find her voice. When Andy, her attacker, finds her a second time, Melinda is able to scream and defend herself, which she wasn’t able to do the first time. Finally, in the last moments, readers are left to assume that Melinda does speak out to Mr. Freeman and will hopefully get the help she needs to recover. “Words float up. Let me tell you about it.” Melinda is a dynamic character because she was able to find her voice and speak out.

As readers, we can learn from Melinda’s story too. Speaking out and getting help is important. We shouldn’t try to handle tough situations on our own. Melinda realized that she could trust Mr. Freeman and he took the time to get to know her and ask her about her life. Hopefully we have an adult in our lives whether that’s an adult, church member, coach, or teacher that we could talk to too.

Student 3 = **Rewrite**

Mrs. Muldoon

Period 2

31 Jan 2015

IWA #1

Melinda is a dynamic character. She changed from the beginning of the book to the end. She changed because at the beginning she was really shy and alone, she didn’t talk to anyone except Heather a little bit. At the end she yelled at Andy.

You can learn to stand up for yourself. If Melinda had told people from the beginning what Andy did to her then maybe she wouldn’t have lost all of her friends and had such a crappy freshman year. People should just tell someone when their sad or struggling.