

COMPLICATED POSITIONING

Abstract

This article is part of a larger, national study that examines how secondary English teachers have responded, through their teaching, to news of Sherman Alexie's serial sexual misconduct. Examining interview data from 18 participants—9 who still teach and 9 who no longer teach Alexie—this study considers how teachers draw upon their gendered and raced identities to shape their curricular decision-making related to Alexie's work. Findings indicated that teachers emphasized their positionality as women and their whiteness when making curricular decisions. Those emphasizing gender framed their curricular decisions through a storyline of agency and solidarity with other women. Those emphasizing whiteness thought carefully about seeking other Indigenous authors to replace Alexie. Still others chose to teach Alexie with a business-as-usual approach, citing a felt hypocrisy tied to whiteness. They wanted to avoid critiquing the marginalized and oppressed. The authors end with implications for English Language Arts teachers and for future research.

Keywords: Literature Pedagogy; Gender; Whiteness; Teacher Identity

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