

A book that puts a face on the ill-conceived, wrongheaded, top down, ALEC-inspired education reforms that harm children

Thomas S. Poetter, Professor of Curriculum Studies in Miami University's Department of Educational Leadership and Ph.D. program in "Leadership, Culture, and Schooling," taught an elective seminar this past summer with 15 doctoral and master's students focusing on the standardization of the curriculum, the high stakes testing movement, and the corporatization/privatization of public education, particularly in Ohio. Almost all of the students are teachers in Ohio schools or educators in higher education settings. The course assignment was to collaborate on a book draft highlighting the students' own experiences as teachers and educators the past 15 years as they have watched public support for teachers and schooling crumble, and the profession itself as well as students get ground into pieces, particularly by the tyranny of the testing movement. The result is what Poetter calls a "flash book," written in just over 30 days and published for immediate consumption by teachers, school administrators, school boards, students, and citizens who have watched quietly while the system has been assaulted by a new wave of "reform." But this time, the consequences have been ever more dire and our timeline for action is now. The title of the book, "Was Someone Mean to You Today?" comes from the story of a co-author's experience with her daughter, a first grader, who came home crying, struggling to verbalize why she felt so bad about school that day. What could cause tears like these? Only someone being mean to her, Mom thought. But she found that the school was systematically coaching the first graders that their low test scores this year would fall even further next year because the second grade test would be even harder, and the consequences particularly punitive. We are killing students' interest, curiosity, and hope with these pervasive tests. The tests actually make students cry. The tests typically tell teachers what they probably already know, and don't lead to helpful educational actions for students. As you all know, the tests aren't designed for educative purposes; they are merely political exercises. The greatest losers in the entire charade are children and teachers. But behind the scenes, we all lose as a generation of students gets only a test prep curriculum instead of a rich, interactive, intellectually and emotionally stimulating curriculum. Poetter says, "This will be our undoing as a society. We have a chance to right this wrong today. Stop the tests. Stop sending public money to private

entities. Stop letting people without educational backgrounds and expertise teach our students. We mortgage the public trust, our talent, and our future, every day we let these injustices stand."

Join Poetter and his students by reading "Was Someone Mean to You Today?" You can find the book at the publisher's website at <http://store.van-griner.com/content/was-someone-mean-you-today-impact-standardization-corporatization-and-high-stakes-testing> and find out more about Poetter's work at www.tspoetter.weebly.com Contact Tom Poetter at tspoetter@gmail.com to discuss the book or to arrange for a book club reading and discussion with the author and students.

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