

**Siegfried Engelmann Memorial Conclusion**  
**Randy Sprick**  
**Author and Lead Trainer, Safe and Civil Schools**  
**April 13, 2019 • Eugene, Oregon**

Another of Zig's esteemed colleagues is Dr. Barbara Bateman. I share these comments on her behalf with humility, respect, and friendship: *My respect and admiration for Zig grew in every one of the almost sixty years I knew him. Zig's unsurpassed contributions to the science of instruction will be further recognized and appreciated as, and if, education becomes an increasingly evidence- and data-based profession. In my view, there has been no greater educator than Zig in the last 2,000 years. I will miss his genius, his voice, and his colorful vocabulary.*

On behalf of the Engelmann family and everyone present or watching remotely, thanks again to all the speakers today. Thanks also to Bryan Wickman, who contributed greatly to all aspects of this memorial and who worked with Zig for 40 years; Jon Palfreman for the video footage chronicling Zig's professional life; and Ricky Carrizales for putting the videos together.

Earlier this afternoon I mentioned conceptual seedlings, but for Zig seedlings were not just a metaphor. He loved trees. Here are a couple of pictures of a forest that Zig and family planted with seedlings about 40 years ago. This flourishing forest is a result of Zig's stewardship of the land.



And here is a grand fir tree given to me by Zig and family at his 80th birthday celebration. So it was planted about 7 years ago. And for size context, here is a four-year-old girl, the seven-year-old tree, a six-year-old boy, and me. To me personally, this visually represents a legacy of Zig's commitment to healthy forests and healthy children. What Zig gave to most of us in this room is the ability to say to these and all children: I can teach you the skills, traits, and behaviors that will allow you to be educated and confident, and those are tools you can use to guide your life and create your own healthy future.



At the reception, the Engelmann family has provided grand fir seedlings for any of you who have a place for one—as a reminder of Zig's lasting impact on us all. I will be planting mine near the tree you see here.

Let's have the last words of this tribute be Zig's own. This closing, read by Zig's grandson Nathan, is part of the conclusion from the groundbreaking work by Zig and Doug Carnine: *Theory of Instruction*. Following this reading will be a brief moment of silence, followed by Bryan, Owen, and Kurt leading us in a toast.

## Excerpt from Theory of Instruction

If we are humanists, we begin with the obvious fact that the children we work with are perfectly capable of learning anything that we have to teach. We further recognize that we should be able to engineer the learning so that it is reinforcing—perhaps not “fun,” but challenging and engaging. We then proceed to *do it*— not to continue talking about it. We try to control these variables that are potentially within our control so that they facilitate learning. We train the teacher, design the program, work out a reasonable daily schedule, and leave *NOTHING TO CHANCE*. We monitor and we respond quickly to problems. We respond quickly and effectively because we consider the problems moral and we conceive of ourselves as providing a uniquely important function—particularly for those children who would most certainly fail without our concerted help. We function as advocates for the children, with the understanding that if we fail the children will be seriously preempted from doing things with their lives, such as having important career options and achieving some potential values for society. We should respond to inadequate teaching as we would to problems of physical abuse. Just as our sense of humanity would not permit us to allow child-abuse in the physical sense, we should not tolerate it in the cognitive setting. We should be intolerant because we *know* what can be achieved if children are taught appropriately. We know that the intellectual crippling of children is caused overwhelmingly by faulty instruction—not by faulty children.

Because of these convictions, we have little tolerance for traditional educational establishments. We feel that they must be changed so they achieve the goals of actually *helping all children*. This call for humanity can be expressed on two levels. On that of society: Let's stop wasting incredible human potential through unenlightened practices and theories.

On the level of children: Let's recognize the incredible potential for being intelligent and creative possessed by even the least impressive children, and with unyielding passion, let's pursue the goal of assuring that this potential becomes reality.