

Zig

He was a giant of a man — in stature, demeanor, and because of the works he created. His undeniable legacy is that he brought literacy to untold numbers of children from sea to sea and then some. One of the blessings of my life was knowing about Direct Instruction and bringing it to the children in Wisconsin.

It all started in the early 90's when I was hired by SRA, and I was trained to sell the many programs that SRA published. Among them was a category of programs called Direct Instruction. As I learned about DI, it became clear that there was something special and unique about these programs. There were scripts, teachers needed training and coaching, data would be collected... Perhaps what struck me most during training was the enthusiasm of the people who taught us to sell these programs. They had all been DI teachers and their passion for this stuff was profound. By that time I had worked for several years as an educational sales rep, and I had never heard such testifying as I did with Zig's programs. I took note.

The more I learned about DI, the more convinced I became that at my disposal was the educational equivalent of the cure for cancer. I took these programs to the schools in Wisconsin (especially Milwaukee) with the zeal of a Christian convert. I knew that with DI we could change kids' lives, and we did — dramatically so. In addition, we changed teachers' lives. We gave them the power to teach effectively.

Zig called me a few times through the years. Because he could sometimes be angry, I shuddered a bit when I saw his caller ID on my phone. I worried that I might have broken a cardinal rule or had somehow messed up a school's implementation. He was never angry with me. Usually his calls had something to do with SRA and their underwhelming treatment of his programs. Perhaps because I was such a true believer, he thought he could trust me to tell him the truth about what SRA was up to.

So I profoundly thank Zig for his life's work and for making my work meaningful. Not only did he enhance my work life, but he has also enhanced my family's lives. My son learned to read with Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons. He also learned multiplication and division from Corrective Math because his school used a discovery math program that didn't believe in multiplication tables or long division. Then in eighth grade when he couldn't spell to save his soul, I hired a tutor to teach him Morphographic Spelling. At his current job in the high tech world, math is 90% of what he does. He also has to email people across the country with proposals, and he assures me that his knowledge of morphographs continues to serve him. And there is one more person who is benefitting. As we speak, my four-year-old granddaughter is learning to read with Teach Your Child To Read in 100 Easy Lessons.

It still saddens me that so many children struggle with reading and that Zig's medicine is not being administered more than it is. Thankfully, there are still true believers delivering his gospel far and wide, but until every last child can read, it is not far enough or wide enough. Don't get me started.

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April 11, 2019