

Preface

Why Are Our Top Educational Leaders Blundering So Badly?

Surveys show that the public is very dissatisfied with education. The record indicates that insufficient progress has been made in solving the ills of education. While our teachers and bad schools are often blamed, my many years of specialized research show that it is our top educators who have blundered badly. We currently have a national program to hold teachers, schools, and students accountable. After you read in this book about all the disasters that have resulted from poor leadership at the top levels of education, I believe you will agree with me that fairness requires that we also hold our top educators accountable! Otherwise, the ills of education will not really improve.

When I claim without fear or favor that, in my opinion, our top public educators have **blundered** badly and have influenced others to do so, it is a serious matter. These people are intelligent and often dedicate their lives to education. So some unusual, strange, weird reason or carelessness must be responsible. I don't want to be labeled a crank, so I have done my homework well and will provide plenty of evidence.

This blunder I have termed

The Biggest Educational and Intellectual Blunder in History

The blunder, simply stated, arose from a false claim:

The scientific method does not exist

This does not sound very important until you understand that the scientific method is actually

The greatest quality control method ever recognized

I shall explain that this false claim caused immense harm in all areas of our lives. I will cover many of these, but this book is concerned mainly with education and with showing the origination of the blunder, the basic reasons it occurred, the harm to education, various suggestions for study, and, last but not least, two practical recommendations to end the blunder and improve education.

An outline of the blunder appears on the next page. Please review it for an extraordinary tale of woeful blundering. Then read on. .

The Biggest Educational and Intellectual Blunder in History

The false claim of non-existence of the scientific method by the Harvard/Conant group and misguided followers (or whoever they are) is extremely significant because it started the biggest intellectual and educational blunder in history, which has resulted in many of the ills of education.

The Biggest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Billions of people affected from 1946 to the present as the blunder spread across the world◆ In amount of money, trillions of dollars (or equivalent currency) have been wasted worldwide
Educational	Because of its disastrous effects on education
and	For these reasons:
intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Intelligence is based more on mental activity than just memory of knowledge◆ The scientific method concerns the stages of mental activity leading to reliable knowledge
Blunder	Because the preponderance of evidence shows <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The scientific method <u>is</u> the method of science and is responsible for the great advances in scientific knowledge◆ The method, while largely developed by scientists, is also the complete method of creative problem solving and decision making for all fields◆ It is the basic method and guide by which we originate, refine, extend, and apply knowledge; thus, it is the method of knowledge◆ Experience has shown that it is the best method ever recognized for obtaining reliable knowledge. Thus, it is the best quality control method for research and planning in the natural sciences, education, and all other domains
In History	Never before has something so well established, important, and documented been claimed by such a prestigious person, group, and followers not to exist. Then this false concept was accepted by so many important people and for such a long time, with huge financial consequences

Almost no one will claim today that education does not have many ills and big problems. In recent years hundreds of thousands of articles and thousands of books have been written about them. We have had the progressive education wars, the Dewey wars, and, in more recent years, the reading wars, the math wars, the science wars, the standards wars, the school choice-voucher wars, the testing wars, and accountability wars.

In addition to education's ills being frequently blamed on our teachers and bad schools, they are often being blamed on the "education establishment," but one professor defined it as "the five million 'professionals,' from classroom teachers to state education commissioners, who...control our public schools"—without any mention of those above this level.

Educational ills are also blamed on a wide variety of other things, including social and behavioral sciences, unions, bureaucracies, social and demographic changes, and those who cling to the status quo.

I claim—and support in this book with valid evidence—the real, basic, fundamental causes of most of our educational ills.

These educational ills are the fault of our top educators. It is they who have blundered badly.

Since everything revolves around the scientific method, let's take a few minutes and consider its essence.

Originally science was called natural philosophy. Around the middle of the 19th century, science and philosophy separated into different domains, and the way in which "scientists" (a word first used around 1841) conduct their pursuit of knowledge began to be called by a variety of names. Originally, the most popular name was "the experimental method." Gradually refined over the years, the method came to be known most commonly as The Scientific Method or Scientific Method.

The word science comes from the Latin word *scientia*, a form of *scire*, which means "to know." How do you know? Use the scientific method for reliable knowledge.

The many other names (or variations of them) for the scientific method are listed on the next page.

NAMES FOR THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Original names:

Experimental method	Method of men of science
Method of science	Heuristic method

and then most commonly called

The Scientific Method or Scientific Method

Over the centuries, numerous names have been used for what is basically The Scientific Method. It is not just for scientists, but a general creative problem-solving and decision-making method for all fields. These are just some of the names it, or a variation of it, has been called:

Method of discovery	Method of knowledge
Process of inquiry	Operation research
Pattern of scientific investigation	Method of inquiry
Scientific research	Way of knowing
Method of study	Reflective inquiry
General pattern of research	Process of search
Scientific mode of thought	Scientific investigation
Key processes of scientific method	Processes of science
Processes of discovery	Scientific procedure
Art of experimental research	Pattern of investigation
Complete method of explanation	Experimental inquiry
Procedures of scientific inquiry	Scholarly investigation
Patterns of thought	Method of reason
Genesis of scientific method	Art of investigation
Scientific research method	Scientific approach
Ways of a scientist	Method of invention
Technique of scientific method	Creative problem solving
Scientific method of inquiry	Tool of inquiry
The scientific pattern of thought	Research methodology
General approach for gathering information	Method of study
Method of intelligence	Research method
Complete act of thought	Method of thought
Method of multiple hypotheses	Research process
The method of development	Method of hypothesis
Hypothetico-deductive method	Method of rational inquiry
The greatest idea of all time	Greatest discovery in science
The complete method of problem solving and decision making	

For Better Education, End *the* BLUNDER

Until *the* BLUNDER is corrected, it is not possible to have the long-term basic continuous improvement in education that you and the public want.

Since education is our largest industry, it is amazing that, as I claim in this book, no one knows the big picture of education. We have no organization that devotes its attention to this objective. Certainly, it is not an easy task, but it can be done, even if there are controversies. In this book I try point out the need to see the big picture of education. This is essential for successful reforms.

Wow! Imagine claiming to have discovered or recognized the biggest educational and intellectual blunder in history and many of its disastrous consequences!

I'm a crank, a genius, lucky, or it was accidental (sometimes also called a "surprise"), like so many great scientific discoveries.

I analyzed myself and again claim that I'm not a crank, for I present in this book an evidenced-based logical story that does not ignore contrary claims. My wife, family, and associates will gladly testify that I'm not a genius. As a sideline, I invested in oil well drilling from 1956 to 1995, and in 40 years, I never got a really lucky break, just minor wells and a load of dry holes, not like those lucky guys on make-believe television soap operas. That leaves only an accident or surprise—and that's what it was. I started out to spend only a few months in 1989 to write a little booklet for students on the scientific method, and I was surprised at what I found!

But the real story that provoked the internal motivation that has kept me going all these years is the harmful effects *the* BLUNDER has had and continues to have on you, your children, grandchildren, schools, and society in general. The real story also includes the details of why I have been forced to write this book to acquaint you with *the* BLUNDER and seek your help in ending it.

In Chapter 1 you are asked to be curious and skeptical about your author. I provide my qualifications. I detail how I came to write this book and explain a little about my unsuccessful efforts to get many of our educators to study the misunderstandings about the scientific method.

While I have written the book mainly for the general public, I have also kept in mind our important intellectual community, for I feel that a large number of its members have been innocently misled by ***the BLUNDER***.

Having made the startling claim of recognizing the greatest educational and intellectual blunder in history, and that the ills of education are mainly the fault of our top educators, it is my duty to substantiate these claims with details and evidence.

There is an old saying, "put up or shut up." In the spirit of this and to help ensure that this book is not ignored like my previous efforts, I make the \$100,000 challenge described on the next page.

The BLUNDER is a fascinating story because of its importance, yet it is a tragic one because of its consequences to society. Read on!

My \$100,000 Challenge

On the next page I explain the terms of my challenge. Here are the 17 organizations I have previously challenged. They are eligible to accept the challenge.

Harvard University
 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
 U.S. Department of Education
 National Academy of Sciences (NAS)
 National Science Foundation (NSF)
 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)
 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
 U.S. Department of Labor
 Educational Testing Service
 Carnegie Corporation
 History of Science Society
 National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST)
 Sigma Xi Scientific Honor Society
 National Association of Scholars
 American Psychological Society
 American Psychological Association
 Cognitive Science Society

Terms of My \$100,000 Challenge to Our Top Educational Leaders

Acceptance

In this book and on the preceding page, I mention the 17 organizations to which I previously issued challenges that were not accepted. Any of these, or a combination of them, is eligible. If there is any dispute among those volunteering, I may select one or more willing ones to be official acceptor of the challenge. In the event they do not accept by December 31, 2006, I may or may not consider offers of other organizations that volunteer.

One value of this challenge is that it provides an official study group. It is hard for any one individual or organization to take a position in favor of my claims for fear of offending those perpetuating *the BLUNDER*.

Study Panel of the Acceptor

The official acceptor is to appoint three individuals to form the study panel that shall devote full time to the project. *I have no say in who these individuals are.*

My Requirements of the Study Panel

- ◆ The members of the panel will swear or state to uphold the honor of science in their work.
- ◆ They will spend part of their time in my office, as my library and files, accumulated over 15 years, will greatly speed their work.

Possible Payment of \$100,000 Challenge

If two or more members of the official panel state unconditionally, when publicly publishing their findings, that a big educational and intellectual blunder has not occurred about the scientific method, I will contribute to the official accepting organization or organizations one payment of \$100,000 without argument or protest. In the event I lose, I may publish a scholarly rebuttal. I have used the term “big blunder” rather than “biggest in history” to make it easier to arrive at a determination that a blunder has occurred.

Expiration of Challenge

The challenge will expire on December 31, 2007. In the event of my death before that date, the challenge will be an obligation of the trust I set up. On the acceptance of the challenge, to ensure possible payment, \$100,000 will be placed in trust. Any disputes about this challenge shall be settled by arbitration, with my liability limited to \$100,000.

I recommend at this time that you either read or skim my publication *The Scientific Method Today*. From it you will get an idea of what the method is all about. It will benefit your personal life and career if you study this material. It appears in Appendix A. The topics covered in the booklet are

The Basic Principles of the Scientific Method
 The 11 Stages of the SM-14 Formula and Famous Examples
 The Three Supporting Ingredients of the SM-14 Formula
 Everyday Problems and Decisions and Explanation of
 Methods and Method
 Helpful Information on Creativity
 Decision Making, Invention, and Scientific Management
 Guide and Worksheet for Applying SM-14

The Style of This Book

This book presents so many valuable ideas, insights, and basic principles that I felt it was necessary to use a style that would aid the reader in understanding and absorbing what was being presented. I hope that you will find this more helpful than continuous lines of type.

You May Want to Skip-Read

It may be unusual for an author to tell his readers to skip-read his work. This book has been written to cover a wide range of subjects and inform a wide range of people. If a page does not interest you, simply skip-read until you come to a more interesting page. My style of writing makes this easy to do.

Short Name

For my writing and for historical writing by others, the term *The Biggest Educational and Intellectual Blunder in History* is too long. So in this book I use the abbreviated version

***the* BLUNDER**

What term the public and historians will give it remains to be seen.

