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Maeser and Nineteenth-Century Educational Theory

Which of the many systems mentioned is the best? . . . None of them.

—Karl G. Maeser¹

On the chalkboard of the southeast classroom of the Maeser School, Maeser wrote, “This life is one great object lesson to practice on the principles of immortality and eternal life.” He signed it and dated it November 9, 1900. As mentioned in the introduction, this simple statement encapsulated a much richer philosophy of education than may be readily apparent at a quick glance. It brings together the educational theory of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi with the theological doctrine revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Maeser’s unique combination of these ideas developed over a lifetime of study, contemplation, and practice. To understand Maeser’s educational theory, it is necessary to understand the major educational theorists of the nineteenth century and Maeser’s view of them. As a trainer of teachers, Maeser knew these major educational theorists and developed his own views in alignment with some while consciously contradicting others. He did not set out to develop a systematic educational philosophy, but he was a diligent student of those who did. Understanding the educational theories of the time provides an important context.



This is a typical British classroom of the nineteenth century. They tended to be strict, harsh, and not child friendly. Maeser's approach was quite different. © 2003 Leeds City Council.

Maeser knew that for many centuries in Europe, education was reserved primarily for the children of elite parents. “Common schools,” where they existed at all, generally sought to give the children of the “commoners” sufficient training in religion and some literacy as to render them less dangerous to the social system. Educational theories, then, began with such education in mind. Pestalozzi, however, began from a different foundation by believing that all children had great potential and should be allowed the right to develop it. He wrote, “We have no right to withhold from any one the opportunities for developing all their faculties.”² This began a revolutionary idea that education should be made available to all. Educators, then, began to ask whether the existing theories that were developed for an elite few could be adapted for all students.

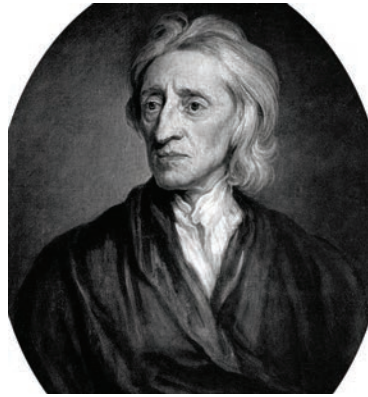
Nineteenth century (and current) theories tended to fall on a continuum between the ideas of John Locke, who saw man as a blank slate upon which experience externally writes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who viewed man more as a seed which if placed in a rich learning environment will intrinsically grow naturally. Both of these authors opposed the almost universally applied threats of physical punishment. Maeser noted

that since the days of Luther, corporal punishment had been viewed as the “alpha and omega” of schools. Teacher qualifications were simple: “Any person able to use a rod vigorously could take a teacher’s position any day.”³ Although they were in agreement about physical punishment, Locke and Rousseau agreed on little else.

Influences on Maeser’s Educational Approach

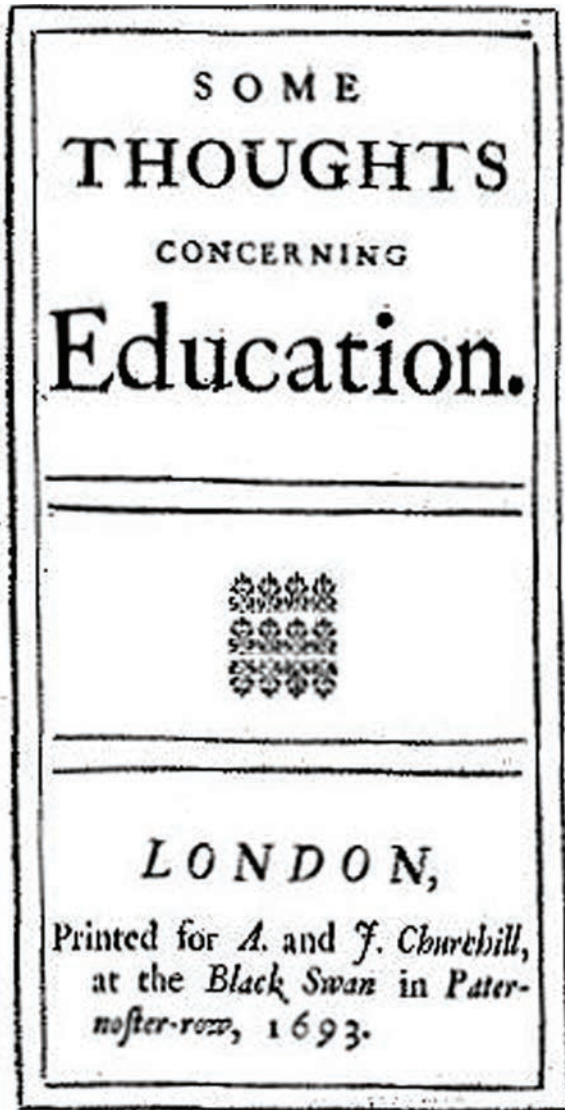
Locke

In 1693, John Locke, the great political philosopher, published a collection of letters he had written to a friend on the proper tutoring of his child. This was one of the first modern treatises on education. Locke did not intend to apply his approach to the general population in a school, but it focused on tutoring an aristocratic boy to become a cultured gentleman. Though Locke opposed physical punishment and physical rewards, he sought to control students through psychological means. He saw it as the “great secret of education” to “get into children a love of credit, and an apprehension of shame and disgrace.”⁴ Once this was done, he could steer them as he pleased.



John Locke (1632–1704). Current educational philosophy tends to lie somewhere between the ideas of Locke and Rousseau. Locke’s theory relied upon praise and shame to motivate students. Painting by Gottfried Kneller, ca. 1697, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

In a passing remark, Maeser acknowledged the important philosophical contributions of the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and John Locke,⁵ but in his teacher training courses he did not include either of them when speaking of educational theory. This was a revealing omission. Maeser opposed a Lockean approach to education on several grounds. Locke believed that only the elite should receive a full education;⁶ Maeser believed that the gospel required us to extend the blessings

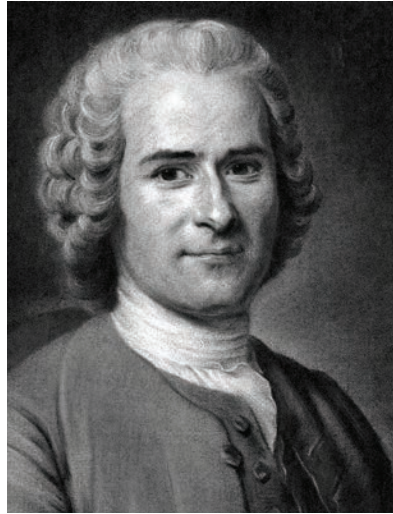


Title page of Locke's most important work on education. Maeser did not include Locke as one of the most important educational theorists. This was not an accidental oversight; like Rousseau, Maeser opposed Locke's system of rewards and punishments. This book was originally published in London, printed for A. and J. Churchill in 1693. Early English Books Online.

of education to all of God's children. Locke proposed systematic sequencing of the curriculum, comparison with others, and clever inventions for "tricking," "cheating," or "entertaining" children into learning his objectives. Locke's "great secret of education" was offensive to Maeser's sense of true education. For Maeser, bribes brought corruption. Oppressive control, whether by physical or psychological threats, produced beasts of burden or resentful rebels; too much structure stifled self-development.

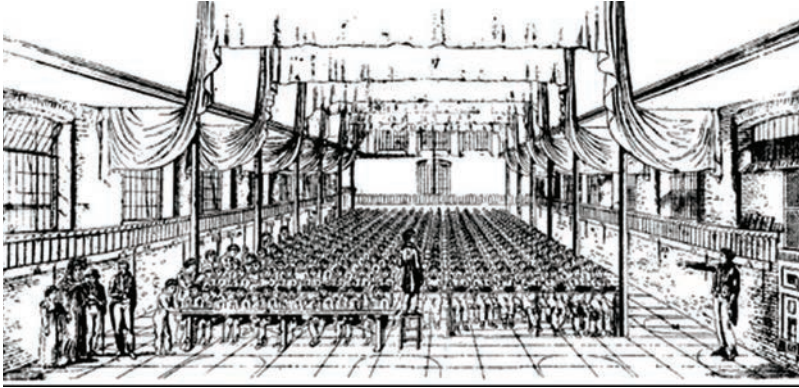
Rousseau

Locke's ideas became an important catalyst for a great reform movement that Maeser did recognize. This movement grew out of the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–88), who read John Locke's *Some Thoughts on Education* and was deeply troubled by Locke's ideal of forming the cultured gentleman. For Rousseau, shaping a young man's behavior by training him to love being well-thought-of and to shun shame was a formula for creating selfishness; he argued that this appeal to social acceptance was the very essence of the master-slave relationship, and the selfishness it enflamed corrupted



Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). Maeser opposed Locke's system of a prestructured curriculum, leaning much more toward Rousseau's theory of self-directed learning. Painting by Maurice Quentin de la Tour (1704–88), courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

society. As an alternative, Rousseau proposed an education based upon the natural development of the child and the real consequences that nature provided. Rousseau's ideas were much more aligned with Maeser's conception of education. Maeser recognized Rousseau's most important educational book, *Emile, or On Education*, as an "epoch-making work." He wrote that Goethe, the great German poet, called Rousseau's book "Nature's gospel of education."⁷ Unfortunately, for Maeser, Rousseau's



Picture of the monitorial school in operation; it shows the interior of the Central School of the British and Foreign School Society in London. The Lancaster monitorial system boasted that one teacher could supervise the learning of a thousand students. Maeser adapted elements of the Lancaster system without adopting its competitive and impersonal elements. Picture from Paul Monroe's A Cyclopaedia of Education, courtesy of Google Books.

ideas were too “visionary and impractical” to be applied directly to the needs of schools. Rousseau’s treatise proposed that a man could raise only one child per lifetime, so it was left to other theorists to propose concrete practices for schools.⁸

Basedow

In his teacher training courses, Maeser taught that Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724–90) made an early attempt to translate Rousseau’s ideas into the realities of school life.⁹ In his *Elementarwerk*, Basedow proposed principles of learning by doing and “urged kindness, persuasion, and consideration of the feelings and characteristics of the pupils.”¹⁰ Compulsion would be replaced by “emulation,” and the “stick” would be banished from the school room. Basedow had been supported by Immanuel Kant, who used Basedow’s *Methodenbuch* when he lectured on pedagogy at the university in 1776.¹¹ Maeser believed that Basedow’s ideas were good, but he recognized that Basedow lacked the personal qualities to carry them out successfully.¹² Maeser taught that educators teach far more about who they were than what they said, and Basedow, though he had acquaintances in high places, “was a low, base man,



This picture shows a large class dividing into small sections where the monitors are instructing their peers. Lancaster and Maeser encouraged older students to mentor younger ones. Maeser believed that when this was done with a “public spirit,” it was far more effective than Lancaster’s competitive model. Picture from Paul Monroe’s A Cyclopedia of Education, courtesy of Google Books.

and brought the system into disrepute. Through the wrong man taking up the work, people lost confidence in the whole system.”¹³ Maeser believed that Basedow’s failures were well advertised and threw educational practice back to the oppressive and coercive measures of the past.

Bell and Lancaster

Two English educators whom Maeser included in his teacher training courses, Andrew Bell (1753–1832) and Joseph Lancaster (1778–1832),¹⁴ developed a relatively inexpensive plan “to extend the privileges of a school education to the poor classes in the crowded cities,”¹⁵ calling it the “Monitorial System.” This approach used two key strategies: (1) the more advanced students were monitors over the less advanced, and (2) the physical facility of the building would be so arranged that one teacher could oversee the instruction of a large number of students. Some schools of this system boasted that one teacher could supervise the schooling of over a thousand students. But according to Maeser, Bell and Lancaster’s approach had a crucial flaw: “the development of individuality cut no figure in this system.”¹⁶ Efficiency in basic skills was its sole object and this efficiency was obtained through highly competitive and highly stressful relationships. A frenzied striving to become the top of the class at meeting the teacher’s objectives was not Maeser’s idea of individuality. Competitive conformity might breed self-ambition and pride, but these qualities were the denial of

individuality. For Maeser, individuality was “that inheritance that separates man from the rest of the physical creation, empowers him with endless progression, and designates him as an offspring of Deity.”¹⁷

Maeser also opposed Lancaster’s system of monitors because it left the teacher “aloof from his scholars, never coming into personal contact with them.”¹⁸ Too often it also bred vanity and jealousy, transforming ambitious monitors into petty tyrants who became more like spies than mentors.¹⁹ Maeser eventually utilized aspects of a monitorial system, but, as will be shown in chapter 13, he grounded them on a very different and fundamentally religious basis.

Pestalozzi

As discussed earlier, Maeser believed that it took the brilliance and tenderness of the Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) to propose “the Modern School System.”²⁰ Pestalozzi proposed an education, not only for the elite, but for all children. Maeser believed that Pestalozzi “brought his school into communion with the realities of life” and “demonstrated the inseparable connection between scholastic and domestic education.”²¹ Throughout his career, Maeser referred to Pestalozzi’s methods, quoted his ideas, and taught his principles. Philip Houtz recorded Maeser’s “Nine Rules of Pestalozzi” taught in Maeser’s teacher preparation classes:

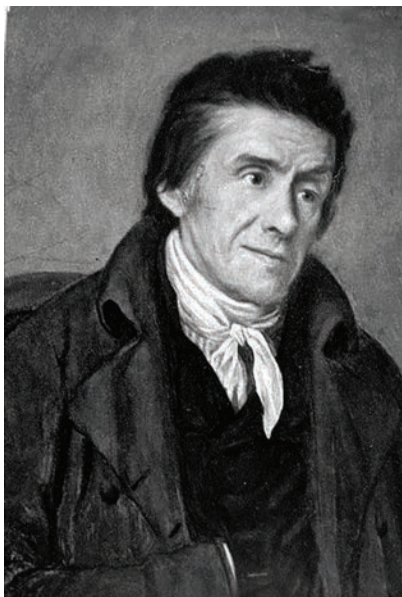
1. Activity is the law of childhood. Accustom the child to do—
Educate the hand.
2. Cultivate the faculties in their natural order. First form the mind then furnish it.
3. Begin with the senses and never tell a child what he can discover himself.
4. Reduce the subject to its elements. One difficulty at a time is enough for a child.
5. Proceed step by step; be thorough.
6. Let every lesson have a point.
7. Develop the idea then give the term.
8. Proceed with the known to the unknown.

9. Synthesis then analysis—not the order of the subject but the order of nature.²²

Chapter 2 reviewed Pestalozzi's basic ideals as Karl was taught them in his early preparation, but the way Maeser applied them after joining the Church shows a unique combination of Pestalozzian practice with Latter-day Saint doctrine.

Combining Pestalozzian Teaching with the Gospel

Pestalozzi is well known for his claim that true education was of the “head, heart and hand.”²³ Maeser adapted this quote and added an education of “the soul.” As a student in Maeser's teacher training class, James E. Talmage quoted Maeser: “The true teacher educates the soul. He should never enter the schoolroom without first preparing himself before God.”²⁴



Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Maeser referred to him as “the apostle of the present educational dispensation.” Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Maeser also taught, “The children of this world consider only this world their sphere of activity and final aims, while the children of light have eternity before them.”²⁵ This meant that true educators must help develop the physical body, the mental capacities, the moral qualities, and “the spiritual aspirations” and potential of their students. Maeser used this educational background to bring the teachings of Brigham Young to fruition. Brigham's view of education combined the most concrete applications and immediate practicality with the loftiest theological ideals. Brigham saw no contradiction in preparing

students to be better farmers, miners, and cattle ranchers while inspiring them to seek the deepest answers to theological, philosophical, and scientific questions. Facing the immediate challenges of pioneer life was viewed as a great opportunity to seek the highest levels of spiritual experience.

Maeser taught that students, therefore, were to receive a broad, religiously grounded curriculum that was constantly demonstrating its practical relevance. They were to discuss theological insights combined with specific assignments to serve each other. They were to sharpen their powers of scientific observation while they learned to recite the lofty words of great writers, poets, and composers. Maeser's own educational theory and practice was refined during the early part of his career and will be discussed at length in chapter 13.

The Family and Education

Pestalozzi offered some beautiful statements about the role of the family in education. For example, in an address on his seventy-second birthday in 1818, Pestalozzi declared:

In the family circle is to be found everything that is highest and most sacred for the people and for the poor. It is the benign influence of the family circle which alone can help the people and it is this aid which is today most urgently needed. . . . From the moral and religious point of view the tie which binds father, mother and children is at the same time the source of all views and feelings which lead man through faith and love to all that is exalted and eternal, and prepares him in the earthly enjoyment of the love of father and mother for sonship with God, and through the obedience of faith in father and mother, exalts him to the obedience of faith in God.²⁶

Pestalozzi believed that the love that naturally develops in a proper family was God-given and the noblest power of nature. He wrote, "In its purity this life [in the home circle] is the highest, the most exalted that

can be thought or dreamed of for the education of our race. It is unconditionally true: where love and the ability to love are found in the home circle there one can confidently predict that the education it affords almost never fails."²⁷ As one who spent most of his career working with orphans, Pestalozzi taught that professional teachers could aspire to nothing greater than to emulate the natural love of parents: "Hence, where the care of real parents is lacking, everything possible must be done to provide it artificially."²⁸

Maeser also recognized the critical importance of the home. He taught, "Mar a sapling and the full-grown tree will show the scar."²⁹ To suppose that education begins when a child enters school for the first time describes reality no better than to believe that "a new hat may be called a full set of clothes."³⁰ He also wrote, "The fireside is an emblem of the future heavenly home. . . . To obtain the highest conception of the calling of a man and a woman in the capacity of parents, one must look upon them from an educational point of view, for from no other does the grandeur of this sacred relationship so well present itself to the mind with all its intricate complexity. The home is the sanctuary of the human race, where each generation is consecrated for its life's mission. The parents are the high priests, responsible to God for the spirit of their ministry."³¹

This notion of divine stewardship given to parents by God was shared by both Pestalozzi and Maeser, but for Maeser the notion carried even greater significance. Families were not merely temporary assignments to introduce children to their divinely appointed, mortal missions; Latter-day Saint doctrine holds that families can be sealed for both time and eternity. This intensifies the stewardship given parents and the expected responsibility of children. Maeser taught that a parent's responsibility begins even before the child's birth, not only in providing the healthiest bodies possible for the pure spirits of these children of God, but even "in their dispositions, conduct, principles of action, in short, in the thoughts and sentiments of their very hearts."³² And "when does parental authority cease?" he asked. Of course, it is gradually transferred to the child as they develop their own free agency, but the responsibilities are not all surrendered; "some remain forever."³³

Maeser taught that parents set a climate of discipline in their homes, for good or ill, and the influence of this climate carries forward to future generations:

It is much to be regretted that comparatively few parents comprehend the just measure of freedom, indulgence, and independent action to be assigned to their children. While some, by their stern and despotic government, incapacitate their children for the just exercise of independence and thus cause them to fall into the extremes of recklessness or weakness of character, others suffer their boys to “sow their wild oats,” and permit their girls to roam beyond their parent’s control in unsafe surroundings as to persons, places, and hours. These weaknesses of judgment have caused the downfall of many otherwise promising young people, and brought grief and shame to many a household.³⁴

The art of surrendering control to personal agency, then, becomes one of the major purposes of education. Both the home and the school must learn this art and must work in harmony for the development of the whole child.

Maeser knew that often schools make their plans independently. He wrote:

The nature and form of instructions in school are matters with which the fireside has no immediate concern. This erroneous view deprives, in too many instances, the school of the co-operation of its most valuable auxiliary, and leaves the home without a clear comprehension of the mental development of its children. All principles underlying the operations of scholastic education, as for instance, regularity, promptness, order, concentration of thought, attention, clear perception, application, obedience, and truthfulness, are those that alone can make domestic education successful.³⁵

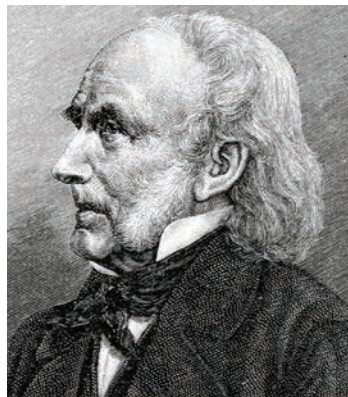
Parents need to be informed of the observations of the school regarding their children and the schools need to be respectful of the sacred stewardship given parents.

Pestalozzian Teachers Maeser Admired

In his teacher preparation courses, Maeser spoke positively of the theories of Pestalozzi, Diesterweg, Fröbel, Basedow, and Rousseau. These authors shared a view of man as naturally good and seeking to grow organically according to natural laws. Laying the groundwork for democratic participation, they tended to believe in the potential for individuals to make their own choices and to guide their own learning. Maeser also included Lancaster and Bell, not because he believed in their philosophy but because he adapted some aspects of their model for developing a “public spirit” among his students, without accepting the competitive elements of their theories.

Adolf Diesterweg

Adolf Diesterweg (1790–1866) was the director of the teachers’ college in Berlin for twenty-seven years until he was forced to retire by the Prussia *Reaktion*. He had been an impassioned defender of the ideas of Pestalozzi in the Prussian educational system before the revolution. He was a strong advocate for teacher training, and he fiercely opposed dictatorial approaches and all forms of oppression. Like Pestalozzi, Diesterweg described education as an inner striving for the true, the good, and the beautiful through “self-activity.” The art of teaching, then, consists of



Maeser admired the theories of Adolf Diesterweg (1790–1866), who adapted Pestalozzi’s ideas to a classroom setting. Diesterweg was a strong proponent of separating church from schools. Diesterweg became more extreme on this matter than Maeser thought appropriate. Courtesy of Portraits of Historic Character.

awakening the student's drive to free self-determination.³⁶ Diesterweg extended these ideas into what he called the "Rational School System" and believed that teachers ought to become more politically conscious. He is one of the founders of what was later called the *Reformpädagogik* movement.³⁷

In his early teacher training classes, Maeser taught his students that Diesterweg was one of the founders of modern education, suggesting that his "Rational School System" succeeded the Lancaster model. Diesterweg picked up Kant's distinction between "synthetic and analytic" knowledge and developed a school system that built upon this distinction.³⁸ Maeser "enlarged on the synthetical and analytical methods of teaching and their merits and demerits."³⁹ Synthetic reasoning endeavored "to construct from a single fact a whole series of conclusions, while its opposite, or the analytical process, leads the child to discover from a known series of facts some missing link in the chain, as it were."⁴⁰ This can be distinguished into discovery learning and expository learning. Maeser believed that both had their place in a proper education.

It should be noted that while Maeser included Diesterweg in his earlier teacher preparation courses, he did not include Diesterweg by name in *School and Fireside* in 1898. Maeser continued to see the strength of Diesterweg's effort to separate church and school for the good of both, and he recognized in *School and Fireside* the attempt to overcome the "dogmatic inflexibility" often demonstrated historically by churches' control over schools. However, Maeser lost some of his enthusiastic support for him as Diesterweg became more polemic in his opposition to any church in education. Diesterweg was obviously antichurch, though not antireligion. While Maeser supported the separation of church and state (including the separation of sectarian doctrine and public schools), he opposed the overreaction of some "progressive elements of society" (and he would have probably included Diesterweg's position here) that "went to the other extreme and advocated the absolute exclusion of religious influence and instruction from

the public schools.” He believed that too often it led to infidelity and agnosticism.⁴¹



Friedrich Fröbel (1782–1852). Maeser believed Froebel was a “benefactor to the human race.” Painting ca. 1840, artist unknown, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Friedrich Fröbel

Friedrich Fröbel (1782–1852), the father of the kindergarten, was the other disciple of Pestalozzi that Maeser referred to in his teacher preparation courses.⁴² We don’t know if Maeser ever personally met Fröbel before Fröbel died in 1852,⁴³ but we do know that Maeser was intimately aware of Fröbel’s approach to learning at least from his days at the Budich Institute. Fröbel designed objects (he called them gifts) as concrete parables.

A ball, for example, represents the sphere. Balls can be played with, rolled, and bounced, but as the powers of observation and reason expand they can point the child to much deeper meanings. They could be made of different colors, textures, and sizes so that the child’s play will foster the child’s development and understanding of spatial relations, proportions, coordination and so forth. With developed insight, the idea of the sphere begins to represent a larger unity and ultimately, the sphere can represent the divine and eternal. So it was with his other gifts. They were concrete objects with which the children would play, but grounded in the belief that such play will enhance growth naturally and expand their horizons.

Fröbel based his practices on the idea that man has a divine mission that he must discover and freely choose to fulfill. Growth needed to occur primarily through self-activity and exploration. Hence the kindergarten was a garden for children where they could grow according to their divine nature.

Maeser referred to Fröbel as a “benefactor to the human race,” because he introduced the methods of the kindergarten.⁴⁴ Maeser believed that the kindergarten system would someday be recognized as “indispensable to school life.” It defined all early instruction as play and storytelling that ideally should be introduced by parents.⁴⁵ Maeser taught that kindergarten songs, games, and stories should be shared in every home. These would help prepare children for school and cultivate in them “the powers of observation, memory, and self-activity.”⁴⁶ It also recognized the divine within the child and encouraged its outward expression.

Antithetical Theorists

By selecting Rousseau, Basedow, Pestalozzi, Diesterweg, and Fröbel as the founders of modern education, Maeser aligned himself with the organic, developmentalist theories of education. This position stood in opposition to theories of external control (currently called behaviorism) that were aligned more fully with Locke’s educational philosophy. This point is illustrated even more powerfully by considering some of the other well-known theorists at the time that Maeser did not include in his review of the founders of modern education. Though Maeser was painfully aware that a number of other educators in his day had a much less positive view of man, a few authors were noticeably absent from Karl’s teaching. Maeser did not accidentally omit Locke or his followers. He made no mention of those theorists in Germany such as Karl von Raumer or Ferdinand Stiehl, who put into operation highly structured methods designed to squelch democracy by requiring common learning outcomes for all in a coercive system. He overlooked theories of education that set out to manipulate individuals toward a common mold for social, political, or economic purposes.

For example, Herbert Spencer was a major philosopher who also wrote about education, but he was omitted from Maeser’s list of important educational theorists. Maeser expressed respect for Spencer’s academic insights; he recognized his logical ability and keen analysis, but he warned that students “will do well to remember, that this work is one of

the mosaics in his materialistic philosophy” and was “too nearly like pure agnosticism, as far as the fundamental principles of revealed religion are concerned.”⁴⁷ Spencer was a fierce advocate of evolution and became what other authors have entitled “the apostle of Agnosticism.”⁴⁸ Maeser, therefore, did not view him as a major contributor to educational theory.

Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) was another obvious omission from Karl’s list of educational founders. Herbart laid the groundwork for a “science of education.” He began from a study of Pestalozzi as well but seemed to miss its vitality and left practically no place for free will.⁴⁹ To make matters worse, in the United States Herbart’s theories were reduced to five formulaic steps for teachers.⁵⁰ Maeser encouraged some of his advanced pedagogy students to read Herbart, but he did not include him in his overview of important educational theorists, probably for the same reason that John Dewey later criticized Herbart. Dewey wrote, “The philosophy is eloquent about the duty of the teacher in instructing pupils; it is almost silent regarding [the student’s] privilege of learning.”⁵¹ Maeser disliked the term *formula* for education because it was “too methodical.”⁵² He taught, “You cannot make a shoe to fit all feet.”⁵³ Herbart’s science of education fought against Maeser’s view of the spiritual development of an immortal soul seeking to fulfill one’s divine mission.

Instructional Strategies

In his teacher-training courses, Maeser reviewed the major methods of teaching that were used at the time. Of course, these methods could be used from a variety of philosophies. A Lockean educator



Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841). Maeser also consciously excluded Johann Friedrich Herbart from his review of the major educational philosophers. Herbart’s ideas left little room for free will and were interpreted in a lockstep manner in the United States. Painting by Konrad Geyer. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

would use them to direct the students to his or her preplanned outcomes while a Pestalozzian would use them to promote the personal development and enlarge the individual agency of the student. Maeser believed that students needed regular opportunities to share what they had learned and to probe deeply through asking their own questions. He also taught that a teacher's effectiveness was demonstrated by the manner in which he or she put forth questions and received answers.⁵⁴ The art of asking and answering questions was called catechization. Maeser believed that this art improved with proper practice. It was an essential skill for conducting any object lesson. Philip Houtz recorded some of Maeser's rules for catechization: Questions needed to be more reflective than memorative. They should be directly related to the lesson topic and part of the curriculum plan, with each question building on the previous. Each question should contain only one proposition. They should be answered in the student's own words in plain language and complete sentences. The teacher needed to keep the general order and maintain discipline throughout the exercises. They were not to interject explicatives like "right," "good," "correct," and so forth.⁵⁵ If, after two or three subordinate questions fail to generate a correct response, the teacher should provide the answer himself.⁵⁶

When Maeser was serving in the general presidency of the Sunday School, a treatise was written that provided examples of catechism for different ages. An example given in the intermediate section illustrated this process:

(A pupil is called upon to read the first verse from the regular text [from the Bible, New Testament, or Leaflets,] . . .)

Q. Which of you has any question to ask on any point in the verse just read?

If no question is asked, the teacher asks:

Q. Which is the first day of the week?

A. The first day of the week is Sunday.

Q. Why did the friends of Jesus wait a whole day before they went to the grave of the Lord after he had been placed in the sepulcher?

A. The day before was the Sabbath of the Jews, when it was contrary to the law of Moses to attend to the dead.

What does the word "Sabbath" mean?

A. The word Sabbath means "Lord's Day."

Q. Which is our Sabbath day?

A. Our Sabbath is Sunday.

Q. Why have most Christians celebrated Sunday as the Sabbath?

A. Most Christians have celebrated Sunday as the Sabbath day, because Christ rose from the dead on that day.

Q. Why do the Latter-day Saints keep the first day of the week as the Sabbath?

A. Because in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has commanded them to keep Sunday as the Sabbath day.⁵⁷

Of course, catechism was to be adapted to the age of the class members. It was primarily a way of asking questions to evoke answers from the students. Maeser did not encourage teachers to memorize a specific catechism for all students but wanted teachers to utilize the power of asking questions and eliciting reflective responses from students. These questions should be adapted to the students' level of development, experience, and maturity.

For Maeser, individual student participation was essential to proper learning. He believed that regular student recitations were a necessary part of education. Recitations were not necessarily the memorized words of another. It meant an oral review of the subject. Memorized poems may have been recited word perfectly, but a rehearsal of a previous lesson given or the presentation of one's own research on a topic was also referred to as a recitation. For Maeser, recitation was the way to assess the learning of the student. During one training course, Maeser complained that too often in schools, "some have not recited in a whole day, or perhaps in a

week.” This posed a particularly difficult challenge for class sizes that could be as large as seventy to one hundred students. Various techniques were, therefore, used to involve more students.

Maeser did not generally favor the “concert method,” where students all respond at the same time back to the teacher.⁵⁸ This approach could be quite beautiful when all are reciting a memorized passage or reading the same thing aloud, but as a test of knowledge, “such an examination was a sham.”⁵⁹ Harmon reported Maeser as saying, “For a bad teacher concert method reading is easier, but [for] a good teacher it is the hardest.”⁶⁰ This was because a good teacher, like a good choir director, must learn to hear the individual voices in the group to notice who needs extra help or practice. The “consecutive method” required students to answer or recite but in a predictable order. This allowed individual participation, but was too predictable to maintain sufficient attention among those students whose turn was not immediate.

The “promiscuous method” introduced unpredictability to the order of those called on, expecting the students to be more alert as they could be called upon at any time. The teacher was expected to ask the question first, then direct it to the student who had been selected so that all would prepare their own answers. Teachers were encouraged especially to notice and call upon those students who did not seem to be paying close attention. The “alternate method” began with the teacher asking a question of a particular student who would answer, then the teacher would ask the next question and the student who just answered would decide which student should answer next. Maeser warned that this method “opens the door to favoritism and will create malice.”⁶¹ The “number method” promoted a randomization of order by assigning each student a number and calling upon the numbers to respond in a random order. Maeser objected to this approach because it distanced the teacher further from the students. The “ticket method” was preferable to the number approach. In this approach, the student’s names were written on tickets and randomly selected from a drum. The drawback was that it took the process out of the hands of the teacher to make judgments about who should respond next. The “hand method” provided a way to see how prepared the whole

class was on a particular question in a much quieter manner. The teacher would ask a question, and all the students would raise their hands. One student was called upon to answer the question, and those who agreed with the given answer were to drop their hands. Students with their hands still held up were then given the opportunity to make corrections. This way the teacher had a better idea of the entire class's understanding.⁶²

Maeser taught that every teacher should be prepared to illustrate any subject with a number of pictures, stories, or comparisons. Lectures may be appropriate in higher grades, but not in the primary ones. If lectures were used, note taking became a necessary skill. Maeser opposed teaching the alphabet in the old method. The old method consisted of memorizing the symbols and the names they have been assigned. Then memorizing the sounds each letter makes. He said, "The letter A has no meaning within itself, it only represents something. . . . Never teach a thing until you have a use for it."⁶³ Letters were to be learned best when associated with a known object. As they break down the sounds in the name, they can learn the purpose of the letters as well as the sounds.

Overall, according to Maeser, the teacher needed to be concerned especially with the students who were struggling. Too much information at once was considered detrimental; he used the Latin phrase *non multum sed mullum* (not many, but much). This meant to him that greater depth was more meaningful than greater breadth. He believed important ideas needed time to sink in. Too much material could be detracting. He recommended that "intellectual studies be taken up in the morning and the mechanical studies in the afternoon."⁶⁴ Maeser taught that "teachers should make as few rules as possible," and more than anything else, "teachers must gain the love and esteem of their pupils, but not at the expense of authority or self-respect."⁶⁵

When Maeser conducted a "normal institute" (a teacher preparation course), he regularly placed a question box in the classroom and invited the participants to drop their questions in the box. Through the course of the day or at the end, questions would be addressed. Maeser also encouraged greater emphasis on the study of nature, claiming, "Nature furnishes the raw material for practical purposes as object lessons."⁶⁶ He taught a

lesson linking art and geography and demonstrated how to teach a primer using school tablets, encouraged the proper relationship between teachers and parents, instructed how to assess proper grade placement, and enumerated the necessary qualifications of a teacher.

These were the theories and practices that informed Maeser's teaching and laid the groundwork for his future educational efforts. When Maeser was asked in his teacher training course which system or educational theory should be adopted, he replied that none of them should be adopted completely: "No good teacher will bind himself, as a pedant to any one system."⁶⁷ He encouraged teachers to be themselves. Each teacher had his or her own strengths and weaknesses and should use what was good from all without accepting the wrong. None of the famous educational theorists had the knowledge of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, which placed education in the context of the fulfillment of a divinely foreordained, personal mission. None of them acknowledged that revelation was continuous and accessible to the individual inquirer. Maeser believed it was important to know the available theories and to personally incorporate those ideas and practices that were consistent with that which God would have them do and become.

Notes

1. Karl G. Maeser, "A Series of Normal Notes taken by J. E. Talmage from Lectures by Prof. K. G. Maeser, B.Y.A., Provo 1878-9," MSS 229, box 9, folder 4, 22-23, LTPSC.
2. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, *Letters on Early Education, to J P Greaves, February 14, 1819* (Syracuse, New York: C W Bardeen, 1898), 104.
3. Talmage, "Normal Notes," MSS 229, box 9, folder 4, 15, LTPSC.
4. See John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London: Printed for A. Millar, H. Woodfall, and others, 1693), 56.
5. Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) was a German mathematician and philosopher. He is best known for his work on calculus, mathematical notation, and mechanical calculation. He wrote one substantial piece on education, *Lettre sur l'education d' un prince* [the education of a prince]. For a review of Leibniz's view of education, see, for example, Patrick Riley, "Leibniz as a Theorist of Education," in Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, *Philosophers*

on *Education* (London: Routledge, 1998), 192–208. Leibniz and Locke represented two poles on the concept of mind: Locke as an empiricist and Leibniz as a rationalist.

6. To understand Locke's views of education for the common man, see Peter Gay, "Locke on the Education of Paupers," in Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, *Philosophers on Education* (London: Routledge, 1998), 190–91. In 1697, Locke proposed severe treatment for the crime of begging. Those between the ages of fourteen and forty-nine should be arrested and sent to do hard labor on "His Majesty's ships." Those over fifty or "maimed" would be sent to prison for three years of hard labor. Women would be sent to the House of Correct for three months, and boys under fourteen would be "soundly whipped." Locke was generous to the working poor but had no sympathy for those too lazy to work.
7. Karl G. Maeser, *School and Fireside* (Provo, UT: Skelton, 1898), 24.
8. On at least one occasion, Maeser also suggested that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* was a work that "should be read by all teachers because it represents the foremost thought of the age." He saw it as "an improved *Emile*." Karl G. Maeser, as cited in "The System of Pestalozzi," *Daily Enquirer*, September 24, 1889, 1.
9. Johann Bernhard Basedow was a German educational reformer known for establishing the philanthropist school. He studied theology and philosophy at the University of Leipzig. He was deeply influenced by the writings of Rousseau and became a friend of Goethe. His most important works were *Methodenbuch* for parents and teachers (1770) and its companion book, *Elementarwerk*, for students (1774). Unfortunately, Basedow did not have the disposition for teaching school. He lacked regularity, had a quick temper, and did not get along well with his colleagues. Maeser taught that his theories were "splendid," but his personal habits prevented him from putting them into practice. See Karl G. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 24.
10. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 24.
11. Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, ed. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 20.
12. Talmage, "Normal Notes," 15–16, LTPSC.
13. Karl G. Maeser, in *Daily Enquirer*, September 24, 1889, 1, as cited in "The System of Pestalozzi."
14. Andrew Bell was a Scottish educator who developed a monitorial system where the most intelligent students taught the less intelligent. He opposed corporal punishment but implemented a highly competitive way of selecting the monitors. His system was used in the army and orphan schools. He was less than tolerant of Joseph Lancaster who developed a similar system. Lancaster was from London and his system rewarded one student for teaching

others. His system was brought to Philadelphia in the early nineteenth century. Karl probably became acquainted with it there, though there was some discussion of it in the *Sächsische Schulzeitung*. Lancaster also opposed corporal punishment, but there are stories of children tied up in sacks or put in cages to bring conformity. Both used prizes extensively. Of course the advantage of this approach was the ability to teach large numbers with little cost. Maeser opposed both corporal punishment and the giving of prizes.

15. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 17.
16. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 25.
17. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 243.
18. Zina Young, "Normal Notes," UA 221, 1879, LTPSC.
19. Karl G. Maeser, "Church School Department," *Juvenile Instructor*, March 1, 1901, 153–54.
20. See Maeser's address to the Utah County Teachers' Association on September 14, 1889, which was reported in "UCTA: 'The System of Pestalozzi': The Excellent Lecture by Prof. K. G. Maeser," *Provo Daily Enquirer*, September 24, 1889, 1. In this article he is quoted as saying, "Many educational reformers have appeared since Pestalozzi, but none is greater, for he laid the great foundation upon which all later reformers have built."
21. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 26.
22. Philip Houtz, "Notes at the Academy," UA 1135, folder 2, 60–61, LTPSC.
23. See, for example, Arthur Brühlmeier, *Head, Heart and Hand: Education in the Spirit of Pestalozzi*, trans. Mike Mitchell (Cambridge, England: Sophia Books, 2010), especially 46–58.
24. Talmage, "Normal Notes," 1878–79, MSS 229, box 9, folder 4, LTPSC, 35.
25. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 55.
26. Lewis Flint Anderson, ed., citing "Pestalozzi's address on his 72nd birthday (January 12, 1818)," *Pestalozzi* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 142–44.
27. Anderson, citing "Views and Experiences," *Pestalozzi*, 116.
28. Anderson, citing "Views and Experiences," *Pestalozzi*, 116.
29. *Deseret News*, June 18, 1892.
30. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 60.
31. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 45, 59.
32. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 61.
33. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 62.
34. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 62.
35. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 267.

36. Horst Lehnert, "Friedrich Adolph Wilhelm Diesterweg," in *Geschichte der Erziehung*, ed. Karl-Heinz Günther (Berlin: Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, 1960), 255–73.
37. Winfried Böhm, *Wörterbuch der Pädagogik* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2006), 109–10.
38. Talmage, "Normal Notes," 18–19, LTPSC.
39. "Normal Institute," *Deseret Weekly News*, August 18, 1875, 11.
40. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 119.
41. While not mentioning Diesterweg by name in *School and Fireside*, Maeser did include a section (6) in chapter 3 that he entitled "Period of Struggle Between Church and School," 27–28.
42. Friedrich Froebel was the only educational theorist mentioned in the 1875 reports regarding the Normal Institute course, which stated that his works "had been of indefinite value" to Maeser as a teacher. "Teachers' Normal Institute," *Deseret Weekly News*, August 18, 1875, 1.
43. One of Froebel's last seminars was held in Dresden in 1848, the year Maeser graduated from his teacher training course.
44. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 111.
45. Talmage, "Normal Notes," 22, LTPSC.
46. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 101.
47. Maeser, *School and Fireside*, 30.
48. See, for example, McCormick, *History of Education*, 363. For further discussion of Maeser's views of Spencer and evolution, see chapter 13.
49. See Patrick Joseph McCormick, *History of Education: A Survey of the Development of Educational Theory and Practice in Ancient, Medieval and Modern Times* (Washington, DC: Catholic Education Press, 1915), 348.
50. Herbart was much more of an intellectual than his predecessors—Comenius, Basedow, and Pestalozzi. He studied with Fichte, visited Pestalozzi, and filled the university position vacated by Immanuel Kant. He tried to make education into a scientific enterprise and his followers reduced teaching to five steps: preparation, presentation, association, generalization, and application.
51. "The fundamental theoretical defect of this view lies in ignoring the existence in a living being of active and specific functions which are developed in the redirection and combination which occur as they are occupied with their environment. The theory represents the Schoolmaster come to his own. . . . The philosophy is eloquent about the duty of the teacher in instructing pupils; it is almost silent regarding his privilege of learning. . . . It takes, in brief,

- everything educational into account save its essence,—vital energy seeking opportunity for effective exercise.” John Dewey, *Democracy & Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 83.
52. Karl G. Maeser, “Proceedings of the Second Convention of the Sunday Schools of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Held in Salt Lake City, Monday and Tuesday, November 12th and 13th, 1900,” *Juvenile Instructor*, February 1, 1901, 67.
 53. Maeser, “Proceedings of the Second Convention of the Sunday School,” 66.
 54. Melvin M. Harmon, “Notes of the BYA Normal Class,” September 3, 1884, UA 100, 176–77, LTPSC.
 55. Houtz, “Notes at the Academy,” 168–71; see also Talmage, “Normal Notes,” 60, LTPSC.
 56. See also Harmon, “BYA Normal Class,” September 11, 16, 17, 1884, 181–83.
 57. *Latter-day Saints’ Sunday School Treatise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1898), 67–68.
 58. These methods are not so well known today by these terms, but these were common designations in Maeser’s time. See, for example, Emerson E. White, *The Art of Teaching: A Manual* (New York: American Book, 1901), 143–59.
 59. “Normal Institute,” *Deseret Weekly News*, August 11, 1875, 9.
 60. Harmon, “BYA Normal Class,” September 5, 1884, 178.
 61. Houtz, “Notes at the Academy,” 165.
 62. Harmon, “BYA Normal Class,” September 5, 1884, 177–78.
 63. Houtz, “Notes at the Academy,” 173, 176.
 64. “Normal Institute,” *Deseret Weekly News*, August 11, 1875, 9.
 65. “Normal Institute,” *Deseret Weekly News*, August 11, 1875, 9.
 66. “Afternoon Exercises,” *Deseret Weekly News*, August 18, 1875, 1.
 67. Talmage, “Normal Notes,” 22–23, LTPSC.