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# The Educational Philosophy and Pedagogical Practices of Eliza R. Snow

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The Educational Philosophy and Pedagogical Practices  
of Eliza R. Snow

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

### The Educational Philosophy and Pedagogical Practices of Eliza R. Snow

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Eliza R. Snow's contributions as an educator have gone largely unexamined yet are an important element of her lifework. An analysis of her writing, both poetic and instructional, as well as minutes and notes from her instructional meetings, supports the view that as an educator Eliza R. Snow had a definite philosophy that informed her educational practice and shaped teaching and learning in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Two articles, one on the educational philosophy of Eliza R. Snow and the other on her pedagogical practices, illuminate her contributions as an educational leader. Snow believed that God's children were eternal and divinely endowed with the capacity to learn; that they were agents, free to choose; that to achieve eternal life their minds must be expanded and refined, transformed and perfected; and that capacity, greatness and usefulness were developed through improving oneself and through serving others.

Snow's pedagogical practices derived from her philosophy and bridged nineteenth-century didacticism with an advocacy for learners as agents. In a time when most learning consisted of rote memorization and drill, Snow granted her students ownership in their own learning processes and used techniques that inspired children with eternal perspective. Snow's pedagogical patterns included moralizing to underscore important points, encouraging application or present-day connection, describing events or concepts unfamiliar to her audience, and editorializing with personal insights or experiences.

Keywords: Eliza R. Snow, educational philosophy, pedagogy

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my family, friends and the faculty who have unselfishly given so much. I express my heartfelt thanks for what I am confident will become eternal gratitude. The following statement from Eliza R. Snow is an apt summary of what this educational journey has been. Thank you for seeing when I didn't have eyes to see, for hearing when my ears were deaf, and for believing when doubt disabled my thought.

We should all realize that we are here on missions, and, in order to fill these missions, it is necessary that we so live as to keep the spirit of God constantly in our hearts, and that will direct us step by step, until we shall have accomplished the work assigned us.

*(Woman's Exponent, October 1, 1880, p. 71)*

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## INTRODUCTION OF STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Conceptual frameworks are adapted to reflect the research question or problem being investigated. A historical qualitative approach was selected for this study based on the research problem of identifying and articulating the educational philosophy and pedagogical practices of Eliza R. Snow. Most historical studies are written in narrative form with the researcher's interpretations connecting the chronology of events, the cast of characters, the setting, and the social forces surrounding the individual or event (Gall, et al., 2010). The story these two articles aim to tell is that of a nineteenth-century educator who taught effectively through precept and example, anchored by a religiously infused educational philosophy that guided her educational practice. These two articles, one on the educational philosophy of Eliza R. Snow and the other on her pedagogical practices, illuminate her contributions as an educational leader.

Snow's contributions as an educator have remained a largely unexamined yet important part of her lifework. The key contribution of this study, contributed through two articles, is demonstrating that as an educator Eliza R. Snow had a definite philosophy that informed her educational practice and shaped teaching and learning in the Church, though she never formally articulated this philosophy. The inference regarding education based on the evidence examined will confirm that "the past has continuing relevance for the present" (Tuchman, 1994, p. 313).

Article 1, "The Educational Philosophy of Eliza R. Snow," written for submission to *BYU Studies* (with a 5,000 word limit and using Chicago Manual of Style), demonstrates her philosophy through an examination of four of her poems written between 1830 and 1876 and of speeches and other public discourse that touched on educational principles. From these sources, four philosophical principles are examined and discussed: 1) We are eternal beings divinely endowed with the capacity to learn; 2) Each person is an agent with freedom to choose; 3) To

achieve eternal life one's mind must be expanded and refined, transformed and perfected; and 4) Capacity, greatness, and usefulness are developed through improving oneself and serving others. One comes to recognize through these poems and other written statements how Snow felt about education.

Article 2, "The Pedagogical Practices of Eliza R. Snow," written for submission to the *Journal of Mormon History* (with a 5,000 word limit and using Chicago Manual of Style) examines, through Snow's written discourses and recorded minutes of her classroom interaction with children, how her philosophy translated into practice. In a time when most learning consisted of rote memorization and drill, Snow consistently engaged children by providing opportunities for them to experience ownership, choice, and participation. Educators in Eliza R. Snow's time tended to be "intellectual overseers" or "drillmasters." Snow, however, was the rare teacher who became an "interpreter of culture." She clarified content, interpreted ideas, and led children in discussion.



ARTICLE 1:

THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF ELIZA R. SNOW

## ABSTRACT

## THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF ELIZA R. SNOW

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Eliza R. Snow believed that learning was not separated into secular and spiritual spheres. Any principle espoused or taught was for the edification and progress of the individual in both the temporal now and the eternal hereafter. All of Snow's lifework can be viewed as educational, though most scholars choose not to look at her in this fashion, because she devoted her energy to the establishment of a faith committed to preparing its members for a post-mortal existence and eternal life with God. She left no formally stated educational philosophy, but her recurrent poetic themes and public discourse reveal educational principles derived from her theology.

Snow believed that God's children were eternal and divinely endowed with capacity to learn; that they were agents, free to choose; that to achieve eternal life their minds must be expanded and refined, transformed and perfected; and that capacity, greatness, and usefulness were developed through improving oneself and serving others. She believed that an educator must hope to enlarge students' minds with the infinite possibility within them and, in this very act, help them to understand that to be like God means going beyond self-gratification to a life of service. Implied in her poetic works and overtly expressed in her discourse was the idea of learning in community, all working together toward a common purpose and spiritual goals.

Eliza R. Snow established a legacy as a poet, as the general president of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and as the wife of two Latter-day Saint prophets, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.<sup>1</sup> Less widely recognized are her educational efforts and her influence on educational philosophy and practice within the Church. Snow's lifework was devoted to the establishment of a faith focused on preparing its members for a post-mortal existence and eternal life with God. Snow's educational work was also eternally focused, but her thinking and practice are unexplored facets of her contributions to the nineteenth-century community in which she lived.

In a 1907 memorial service in honor of the Prophet Joseph Smith's 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday, Elder B. H. Roberts paid tribute to Joseph as a "Prophet-Teacher." He expressed the idea that a prophet must primarily "be a teacher of men, an expounder of the things of God." Roberts further suggested that the Prophet Joseph's "philosophical principles were flung off in utterances without reference to any arrangement or orderly sequence."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Eliza R. Snow, acknowledged as a "prophetess" by her peers, was also a teacher. Snow "became very intelligent in regard to the principles of the Gospel, from frequent conversations with the prophet [Joseph], whose knowledge of God and the plan of salvation seemed to unlock the past and future eternities."<sup>3</sup> Like Joseph, Eliza left no formally stated educational philosophy, but her recurrent poetic themes and public discourse statements reveal educational principles that also expounded the things of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Jill Mulvay Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson, "A Wary Heart Becomes 'Fixed Unalterably': Eliza R. Snow's Conversion to Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 30, no. 2 (2004): 98.

<sup>2</sup> B. H. Roberts, *Joseph Smith, the Prophet-Teacher: A Discourse*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1908), 62. Brigham Henry Roberts (1857–1933) was an assistant Church historian for 33 years.

<sup>3</sup> Emmeline B. Wells, "Pen Sketch of an Illustrious Woman," *Woman's Exponent* 9, no. 7 (September 1, 1880): 50.

### Snow's Core Educational Assumptions

The Saints in the Utah Territory were tasked with building a society that hoped to be temporally, if not also somewhat intellectually, independent of the world they had left. There was a simplicity required because of tough temporal circumstances; and yet, in that simplicity Snow presented an example of fundamental principles to assist any person to grow and develop, and in her words to “possess energy of character sufficient to determine to be somebody and to do something.”<sup>4</sup>

In “Good Society,” a prose piece written between 1854 and 1856, Snow wrote, “He [God] has implanted in our organizations, the germ of mental, moral, and physical faculties capable of expansion, and possessing the rudiments of eternal progression.”<sup>5</sup> Ten years later, in a letter to Dr. Martin Luther Holbrook, editor of the New York journal *Herald of Health*, Snow added “social” to the list of faculties to be expanded and described human progress as “the development of all the rational and noble faculties of man, physically, morally, mentally and socially.”<sup>6</sup> Snow modified her list of faculties in a second letter to Holbrook in 1869, replacing sociality with spirituality and interchanging mental with intellectual.<sup>7</sup>

This list of faculties or abilities—mental or intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual—summarize the types of learning or development Snow felt were necessary for eternal

<sup>4</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “To the Young Sisters in Provo,” *Woman's Exponent* 2, no. 22 (April 15, 1874): 170.

<sup>5</sup> Eliza R. Snow, *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political*, vol. 1 (Liverpool: F.D. Richards, 1856): 135. Snow wrote this piece for the Polysophical Society, a bi-weekly gathering organized by Lorenzo Snow where “speeches, songs, readings recitations and instrumental music” were presented. See also Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1884): 251–53; and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “Three Women and the Life of the Mind,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 28–32.

<sup>6</sup> Jill Mulvay Derr and Matthew J. Grow, “Letters on Mormon Polygamy and Progeny: Eliza R Snow and Martin Luther Holbrook,” *BYU Studies* 48, no. 2 (2009): 157.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

progression.<sup>8</sup> While Snow advocated for the complete development of all of one's abilities, it was the improvement of the spiritual and moral faculties that would receive her greatest attention.

Snow reflected that when the Saints arrived in the Utah Territory “there were no regular schools; but as soon as we obtained the necessaries of life, attention was turned to educating the children mentally, but as they were born in the Church, and heirs by right to the kingdom, no thought was bestowed upon their spiritual culture.”<sup>9</sup> Snow believed it was spiritual food that the young wanted and lacked and that the education of the world could not prepare youth to fill high positions in the Kingdom of God.<sup>10</sup>

### **Educational Themes in Snow's Poetry**

Snow's educational thinking was not a “vain philosophy, full of doctrine that [was] not of the Lord” but rather one comprised of principles based on eternal truth.<sup>11</sup> Beginning in her early twenties, her poetry would be “a means to convey her feelings and ideas.”<sup>12</sup> In 1838, Joseph Smith called upon Snow to use her poetic gift to bless the Latter-day Saints. As Zion's designated poetess, she would add to her existing work and amass a collection of over five

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<sup>8</sup> See Snow, “To the Young Sisters in Provo,” 170; “Special Meeting of Kanosh Relief Society,” *Woman's Exponent* 9, no. 13 (December 1, 1880): 103; “Minutes of Quarterly Conference of the Relief Society of Utah Stake,” *Woman's Exponent* 13, no. 20 (March 15, 1885): 159–60; Eliza R. Snow, “Well, If We Make it So,” *Recitations for the Primary Associations in Poetry, Dialogues, and Prose No. 1: Adapted to the Capacities of Members from the Age of Four to Ten Years* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, Printers and Publishers, 1882), 177.

<sup>9</sup> “Relief Society Reports,” *Woman's Exponent* 6, no. 18 (February 15, 1878): 138.

<sup>10</sup> “Second Annual Meeting of Tenth Ward Young Ladies Retrenchment Association,” *Woman's Exponent* 3, no. 17 (February 1, 1875): 130. See also “East Porterville, Sept., 1878,” *Woman's Exponent* 7, no. 9 (October 1, 1878): 66.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, ed. Bruce R. McConkie, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 320 and vol. 3, p. 274.

<sup>12</sup> Jill Mulvay Derr, “Form and Feeling in a Carefully Crafted Life: Eliza R. Snow's ‘Poem of Poems,’” *Journal of Mormon History* 26, no.1 (2000): 7.

hundred poems.<sup>13</sup> What a reader finds in Snow’s poetry is her most cogent expression of the relationship of God to His children, and it is this understanding and her sense of the purpose of life that undergirds her educational philosophy.

Four poems with explicit education themes written between 1830 and 1867 were used to create a conceptual framework of Snow’s educational thought. (The full text of these four poems is included at the end of the article.) “Genius Emancipated” portrays the fruitful effects of education and the potential for continued growth and learning. “The Tool and the Gem” focuses on the educational process and the interplay between the teacher and the learner. “To Parents” underscores the importance of educating children to prepare them to perform the mission God intended. “Man Capable of Higher Development,” the capstone piece, connects the educational ideas expressed in the other three poems and clearly articulates Snow’s belief that the “grand immortality man is design’d” for is the ultimate educational outcome.

The first poem, “Genius Emancipated Or, the Effects of Education on the Human Mind,” was published in 1830 in the *Ohio Star* newspaper.<sup>14</sup> Snow was in her mid-twenties at the time and lived with her family in Mantua, Ohio. It was a season of religious seeking for Snow, who had affiliated with the Campbellites and would soon become acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith. “Genius Emancipated” speaks of immortal crowns and heavenly thrones, religious concepts consistent with Snow’s Christian beliefs. Her vivid imagery of an uneducated person

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<sup>13</sup> Jill Mulvay Derr and Karen Lynn Davidson, *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009), 73; [Emmeline B. Wells], “Eliza Roxie Snow Smith: A Tribute of Affection,” *Woman’s Exponent* 16 (December 15, 1887): 109.

<sup>14</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Genius Emancipated,” in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 19; also in Snow, *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political*, vol. 1, 31.

chained by “Ignorance,” eventually unleashed by the freedom that only education offers, foreshadowed the growth that awaited Snow when she became a Latter-day Saint.<sup>15</sup>

The second poem, published in 1841, “The Transformation; or the Tool and the Gem,” was written for the students of the newly established Nauvoo University.<sup>16</sup> Beginning in Nauvoo and through the end of her life, Snow would use her poetry to “chronicle her people’s history, broadcast their beliefs, and speak in their defense.”<sup>17</sup> In this poem Snow echoes many of the same educational messages articulated in “Genius Emancipated.” The human mind was “a useless gem...wrapped in cumbrous earth” until the “transforming edge” of education “expos’d to view—its nature and its worth.”

The third poem, “To Parents,” was written for a meeting of the Polysophical Society which met in Salt Lake City during the winter of 1854–55.<sup>18</sup> This group (organized by Snow’s brother Lorenzo) gathered weekly for musical and literary presentations by its members. While Snow would never bear children, she was affectionately referred to by many as a mother in Zion. In her poem “To Parents,” she reminds mothers and fathers that the “improvement of the youthful mind” should be a priority because adult action and post-mortal progression depend upon the “outlines sketch’d in youth and infancy.” This poem is another reminder that the purpose of education for Snow was to prepare a people for a post-mortal existence and eternal life.

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<sup>15</sup> Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, 1–4. See also Derr and Davidson, *Wary Heart*.

<sup>16</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “The Transformation; or the Tool and the Gem,” in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 91; also in Snow, *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political*, vol.1, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, 73.

<sup>18</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “To Parents,” in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 243; also in Snow, *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political, Also Two Articles in Prose*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Latter-day Saints’ Printing and Publishing Establishment, 1877): 156.

The fourth poem, “Man Capable of Higher Developments,” was published in 1867 in the New York journal *Herald of Health*. This poem centers on the Latter-day Saint doctrine of becoming Gods, a belief that permeated Snow’s educational thought and a recurrent theme in her work with the Church auxiliary organizations.<sup>19</sup>

In 1882, Snow compiled two volumes of *Recitations for the Primary Associations in Poetry, Dialogues, and Prose*. These materials were prepared for the “spiritual cultivation and progress” of the children of Zion and included “Genius Emancipated,” “The Tool and the Gem,” and “Man Capable of Higher Development.”<sup>20</sup> Snow’s inclusion of these poems in her Primary curriculum suggests the value she placed on her educational message. She would also encourage Primary leaders to explain the meaning of the recitations to the children so they were fully understood and not merely memorized.<sup>21</sup> Snow’s educational messages were shared with adults and children alike.

### **Snow’s Perspective, Eternal and Practical**

While Snow’s focus was eternal and elevated in tone, she recognized the importance of applying that perspective to daily choices and practical living. In a meeting of the Young Women of Weber Stake in 1881, Snow impressed upon the youth in attendance that the key to self-improvement was to practice what they professed. “The Lord has given us perfect principles, but it will require the practice of these as well as the profession.”<sup>22</sup>

In Snow’s poems, as in her speeches and writing, she repeatedly mentioned perfect educational principles, all of which she saw as theologically based. Through imagery and

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<sup>19</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Man Capable of Higher Developments,” in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 380; also in Snow, *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political*, vol. 2, 101.

<sup>20</sup> “Primary Speaker,” *Woman’s Exponent* 11, no. 7 (September 1, 1882): 53.

<sup>21</sup> Snow, *Recitations*, preface..

<sup>22</sup> “Quarterly Conference of the Y.L.M.I.A. of Weber Stake,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 3 (July 1, 1881): 24.



heightened poetic expression, she demonstrated her nuanced understanding of the connection of these eternal principles to the practical experience of living and learning. As education in the country and in the Utah Territory became increasingly secularized, she continued to keep her eye on the ultimate purpose she saw in education.

### **Snow's Educational Principles**

#### **Principle One: We are eternal beings divinely endowed with the capacity to learn.**

In her poem, "Man Capable of Higher Development," Snow wrote:

We wake into being—how helpless at birth!

How short, at the longest, our visit on earth!

Too short to develop (we merely begin)

The germ of the Deity planted within.<sup>23</sup>

This, of course, is the revolutionary doctrine that Joseph Smith taught and Eliza Snow embraced: each individual on earth contains divine potential. Each person is not only capable of becoming *like* God, but possesses the capacity to attain godhood. For a person to receive God's approbation in life, choices of good and evil are crucial; but to the adherent of Mormonism, even more is required. Knowledge and personal growth take on significance key to the mortal experience. Positive traits learned, information gathered, wisdom gained, even skills learned—each draws the person closer to Godhood. Or, as Snow expresses the idea later in this same poem:

Though frail and imperfect, unlearn'd and unwise

We're endowed with capacities needful to rise

From our embryo state, onward, upward!—at length

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<sup>23</sup> Snow, "Man Capable," in *Complete Poetry*, poem 380.

To a fullness of knowledge, of wisdom and strength.<sup>24</sup>

The implications in this doctrine were monumental to Snow. In her poem “To Parents,” Snow reminds those who teach that they do not have the power to create ability in their learners but only to cultivate or advance a learner’s growth. The poem underscores the fact that untrained mental powers “will not arrive at their diploma’d worth, / nor shed their own inherent lustre forth.”<sup>25</sup>

Divine endowments will not reach their capacity without education; and, as Snow so vividly portrays in “The Tool and the Gem,” that potential is often masked in a “rough exterior” with capacities “forc’d to lie in buried depths.” In this poem education is the mechanism that enables the transformation:

Each cumbrance from its surface, clear’d—

The gem, expos’d to view—

Its nature and its worth appear’d—

Its form expansive grew.<sup>26</sup>

“Genius Emancipated,” the earliest of Snow’s educational poems, also expresses the idea that as education frees the mind from ignorance “unbounded prospects in succession rise.”<sup>27</sup>

Snow continued to acknowledge an individual’s capacity to learn, reflecting principles she learned from Joseph Smith. Smith taught that all “minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement”<sup>28</sup> and that God “created man with a mind capable of

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Snow, “To Parents,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 243.

<sup>26</sup> Snow, “Tool and Gem,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 91.

<sup>27</sup> Snow, “Genius Emancipated,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 19.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 7 vols., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948 printing), 6:310–12.

instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect.”<sup>29</sup> In like terms, Snow taught that “God has implanted in the human organization the germ of every faculty necessary for a perfected glorified being; and these germs are all developed or undeveloped according to circumstances.”<sup>30</sup> Implied in this statement is the idea that a good teacher—or a good school, or a good Church organization—could affect those circumstances and prepare a child not only for this world but for worlds without end.

**Principle Two: Each person is an agent with freedom to choose.**

Education should enhance a person’s freedom to choose and his or her ability to act. In “Man Capable of Higher Development,” Snow gives poetic expression to the Latter-day Saint doctrine of moral agency.

Man becomes his own agent, with freedom to choose,  
 With pow’r to accept and with pow’r to refuse;  
 With a future before him, the sequel of life,  
 To which this is a preface with consequence rife.<sup>31</sup>

The same year “Man Capable of Higher Development” was published, Snow also published a poem for children with choice as a central theme. Where adults had powers to accept or to refuse, “Gold and Tinsel” didactically warns children to “be very careful what you choose, / and careful too, what you refuse.”<sup>32</sup> Through the image of “tinsel’s glitt’ring show” and the need to not be “deceived by shining things” Snow illustrates the principle of

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<sup>29</sup> *History of the Church* 2:8.

<sup>30</sup> Eliza R. Snow Smith, “Conscience,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 7 (September 1, 1883): 53.

<sup>31</sup> Snow, “Man Capable,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 380.

<sup>32</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Gold and Tinsel,” in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 383.

discernment—a skill youth need to learn in order to make wise choices—and “squander no talents, no health and no time.”<sup>33</sup>

Snow was reared in a home where parents, she said, “extended to their children the right, and afforded us every opportunity we desired to examine all creeds—to hear and judge—to ‘prove all things.’”<sup>34</sup> In like manner, in her poem “To Parents,” Snow encourages those with children to “inspire your sons and daughters too,” to take advantage of opportunities when “education waits before your door.” This poem also expresses the responsibility of the learner.

‘Tis true, the Lord his Spirit does bestow,  
 And thro’ that medium, streams of knowledge flow:  
 But when the opportunities are giv’n,  
 Thro’ the o’er-ruling providence of heav’n  
 For self-cultivation; no one need expect  
 That God with smiles will sanction our neglect.<sup>35</sup>

Individuals who understand their own eternal nature and who develop—with a teacher or a parent’s encouragement—a sense of who they can become, must choose self-cultivation. God may plant the germ of divinity, but He expects His children to improve it and nurture its growth.

In “Genius Emancipated,” the individual with the educated mind “aims at crowns on high, / and seeks a passport to the upper sky.”<sup>36</sup> This somewhat veiled idea of the use of agency

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.; Snow, “Man Capable,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 380.

<sup>34</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Life Sketch” in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000): 8–9.

<sup>35</sup> Snow, “To Parents,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 243. The last two lines reflect edits made to the original poem for publication in *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political*, vol. 2. See Derr & Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, 1171.

<sup>36</sup> Snow, “Genius Emancipated,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 19.

to achieve an eternal end is more fully expressed in Snow's poem, "We Are, We Were and Are to Be."

Man, as free moral agent, has the right  
 And power to choose his future destiny  
 Thro' his adherence to whichever law  
 Or code he shapes his life. The fullness of  
 The Everlasting Gospel of the Son  
 Of God contains the perfect law by which  
 Perfection's full proportions are attained,  
 With Immortality and Endless Lives.<sup>37</sup>

In a similar vein, again contrasting with a piece written for children, Snow wrote:

I have noticed that some of those who go to school most, and have the best advantages do not learn as fast as others who have few privileges, but apply themselves more diligently to their studies. Merely going to school does not make scholars, without close application to study.<sup>38</sup>

Individual motivation works both in religious development and in secular learning.

Within the religious context, the Holy Ghost is an important influence in one's choice. Secularly, information allows for informed choice. With the gift of the Holy Ghost those choices can be inspired as well as informed. Snow "desired all to cultivate the Sixth Sense which was the Spirit

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<sup>37</sup> Eliza R. Snow, "We Are, We Were and Are to Be," in Derr & Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 430.

<sup>38</sup> Eliza R. Snow, "A Good Example," *Juvenile Instructor* 2, no.3 (February 1, 1867): 22.

of God.”<sup>39</sup> She also explained that “we need not be in the dark; for there are ways by which we can be instructed. We have God’s Spirit and agency at our head.”<sup>40</sup>

**Principle Three: To receive eternal life, our minds must be expanded and refined, transformed and perfected.**

Each of Snow’s four educationally themed poems includes the concept of immortality (living forever) and/or eternal life (to live forever in the presence of God.)<sup>41</sup> The latter is achieved as individuals are “perfected in body, perfected in mind”<sup>42</sup> as they expand or gather knowledge and refine or use that knowledge they are transformed from “gem[s]...chain’d in crudeness” to “polish’d stones.”<sup>43</sup> Snow described the need for this process of refinement and taught that “we are never to come to a standpoint. We are to be progressing, and growing better. If we have done well to-day, we must do still better tomorrow. We believe in eternal progression.”<sup>44</sup>

For Snow, with an eternity to grow and with the motivation provided by the exhilarating ability to choose, potential joy was limitless. She endeavored in her speeches and her poetry to inspire her audiences with that same excitement. “I aim—I live for Immortality,” she wrote. “Life, knowledge, bliss, without one stopping point.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> “Condensed Account of a Meeting Held at American Fork, Aug. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1873,” *Women’s Exponent* 2, no. 9 (October 1, 1873): 66.

<sup>40</sup> Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: General Board of YLMIA, Deseret News, 1911): 39.

<sup>41</sup> Leuan G. Otten, “Immortality and Eternal Life,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:677.

<sup>42</sup> Snow, “Man Capable,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 380.

<sup>43</sup> Snow, “Tool and Gem,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 91; Snow, “To Parents,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 243.

<sup>44</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “An Address by Miss Eliza R. Snow Delivered in the Tabernacle, Ogden, at a Relief Society Meeting, Thursday Afternoon, August 14, 1873,” *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star*, (January 13, 1874): 18.

<sup>45</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Immortality,” in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 354.

The danger, of course, is the hubris that can sometime attend such lofty goals. Snow warned her readers to remember the ultimate source of both their capacities and their potentialities. In her poem “The Tool and the Gem,” she described education as the tool that could transform a person from rude, cumbrous earth into a beautiful work of art. The gem to be transformed was the human mind; the sculptor who “lent his aid” was God.<sup>46</sup> Individuals could assist in the transformation through their choices and personal effort, but only the guidance and power of the Lord could ever carry them to an eternal end.

Still, Snow put great stress on individual responsibility. It was not enough to pray for perfection or to ask God to change one’s heart instantaneously. For her, progress was a long learning process requiring daily effort:

Oft I pause and ask myself the question, What is the object of life? There certainly must be a grand and holy purpose at the foundation of our creation, else why this innate longing and thirst for knowledge—this perpetual desire for improvement and advancement. . . .The object of this life must be to test us, to try us in all things, and to make us more “perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect.” We may feel that we are far from this, but it is by overcoming the small things, and being able to bear the little trials and perplexities of life patiently and meekly, striving to profit by our daily experiences, that we are enabled to become more perfect, overcoming our weaknesses and not allowing them to overcome us.<sup>47</sup>

Snow expressed a similar sentiment in a dialogue written expressly for use in the Primary Association:

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<sup>46</sup> Snow, “Tool and Gem,” in *Complete Poetry*, poem 91.

<sup>47</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Object of Life,” *Woman’s Exponent* 7, no.11 (November 1, 1878): 81.

You, each one, will form your own characters, either for good or for evil, and what you do now, is laying the foundation for your future lives. If you want to be great, you must be good—if you want to be good and great, you must lay a solid foundation. A flimsy one will not support a noble structure.<sup>48</sup>

On another occasion in a farewell address to the pupils in her Nauvoo School, Snow gave a rather secular-sounding interpretation of the kingdom she envisioned:

How awkward you would feel to be introduced into the society of beings filled with intelligence and surrounded with glory, if entirely unprepared for such society? Life itself might seem too short for such a preparation. Then diligently seek wisdom and knowledge.<sup>49</sup>

Here again, Snow saw the infusion of the spiritual and secular in her vision of eternal glory, or better stated, she saw no difference between the learning a student does in school and the learning that comes from the spirit. The mind and spirit are one, and a god must possess ultimate goodness, ultimate knowledge, and ultimate wisdom.

**Principle Four: Capacity, greatness, and usefulness are developed through improving oneself and serving others.**

As Snow bade farewell to her thirty-seven scholars aged four to seventeen in the large second-story room of Joseph Smith’s red brick store in Nauvoo in 1843 she again tried to “impress [their] minds with the importance of scholastic pursuits.” At the same time, Snow

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<sup>48</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Sunday Excursion,” in *Recitations for the Primary Associations in Poetry, Dialogues, and Prose No. 2: Adapted to the Capacities of Members from the Age of Ten to Fifteen Years*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, Printers and Publishers, 1882), 106.

<sup>49</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Nauvoo Journal,” in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000): 70.



seemed to recognize the danger of an over emphasis on self and urged students to employ their knowledge and individual talent in being useful.<sup>50</sup> She said,

Let your thoughts be elevated—let them rise superior to the superficial glare—the pompous nothingness of the fashion of this world which ever passes away, and study to make yourselves useful. By early habit you will accustom yourselves to blend the useful with the agreeable in such a manner as that the every-day duties of life will be pleasurable; and that course of life which proposes the most usefulness, will conduce most to your individual happiness by contributing most to the happiness of others. How much better—how much nobler the principle of habituating yourselves to derive pleasure by contributing to the happiness of those around you, than to seek it in the indulgence of that little selfishness of feeling which extends no farther, and has no other object than mere personal gratification?<sup>51</sup>

This last educational principle, also found in Snow's "Man Capable of Higher Development" expresses the idea that the blessings of education and knowledge are intended to extend beyond the individual self. Capacity refers to the power to receive knowledge or ideas where greatness is the strength or extent of that intellectual capacity. Snow illustrates the impact of these acquired traits in "Genius Emancipated." The untrained or undeveloped mind is a dark and dreary scene with a "strange mysterious gloom" until education enters and rises "phoenix-like, to renovate the earth." The effects of education are not confined to the individual human mind but "swept th' encumber'd soil, / And made it teem with honey, wine and oil."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 68–9.

<sup>52</sup> Snow, "Genius Emancipated," in *Complete Poetry*, poem 19.

Again, for Snow, the purpose of life was improvement, and a goal of education was to cultivate and prepare oneself for usefulness.<sup>53</sup> She once boldly proclaimed that individuals “might as well have been born in some other nation or dispensation” if they did not feel they had “a mission in Zion.”<sup>54</sup> While a person may find joy in growth and may work constantly at self-improvement, the greatest achievement comes in turning outward, not inward, and working with others to improve life for everyone.

To this end, Snow believed that a united effort would “accomplish incalculably more than can be accomplished by the most effective individual energies.”<sup>55</sup> Implied in her poetic works and overtly expressed in her discourse was the idea of learning in community. Snow encouraged her Nauvoo students to “court the society of the aged” who were like “the sturdy and inflexible oak” whose “spreading umbrage” shelters the tender twigs of childhood and youth.<sup>56</sup> She also taught that one of the blessings of being organized was to bring people together like “coals of fire, imparting warmth and life to one another.”<sup>57</sup>

An educator, then, must hope to enlarge students’ minds with the infinite possibility within them; and in the very act of doing so, help them to understand that to be like God means going beyond self-gratification to a life of service. Snow believed the more good a person did “the more their faculties would become developed.”<sup>58</sup> She said it was “not the talented alone,

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<sup>53</sup> See Snow, “Object of Life,” and “Good Example.”

<sup>54</sup> Snow, “An Address,” *Millennial Star*, 20.

<sup>55</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Female Relief Society,” *Deseret News* 17, no.11 (April 22, 1868): 1.

<sup>56</sup> Snow, “Nauvoo Journal,” in Beecher, *Personal Writings*, p. 70.

<sup>57</sup> “Utah Stake,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12 no. 10 (October 15, 1883): 78.

<sup>58</sup> “Relief Society Conference,” *Woman’s Exponent* 8, no.1 (June 1, 1879): 252.

but the willing, that are the most useful” and that “in order to improve society” people must first improve themselves.<sup>59</sup>

### Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the educational principles that guided Snow’s work are captured in this concluding thought to her Nauvoo class:

With the most earnest desires for your present & eternal welfare, praying God in the name of Jesus Christ that you may be blest with the richest of heaven’s blessings—that you may be preserved from the evils that are in the world, and be of that number who...inherit the glory of the celestial kingdom, I bid you all, an affectionate farewell!”<sup>60</sup>

Eliza R. Snow was an educator. Her teachings and philosophical thought will continue to influence the lives of learners willing to read her words and, like her, see their lives as one eternal round.

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<sup>59</sup>“R.S. Reports,” *Woman’s Exponent* 8, no. 11 (November 1, 1879): 86.

<sup>60</sup>Snow, “Nauvoo Journal” in *Beecher, Personal Writings*, p. 71.

## Appendix

### Selected Poems by Eliza R. Snow with Education Themes

#### Poem 1: Genius Emancipated

Published in *Ohio Star*, May 19, 1830

The scene was rude, and in its scenic pride,  
 Wild, mossy thickets cluster'd side by side,  
 Spontaneous rubbish cloth'd the rugged soil,  
 The lean brake doted on the thistle's smile;  
 Nature's green umbrage closely interwove,  
 And form'd the darksome, orbless arch above.  
 There, on the rocky base by Ignorance chain'd,  
 Untam'd, uncultur'd, savage Genius reign'd;  
 Thick clouds of vapor gather'd round her head,  
 Her winding paths thro' miry mazes led,  
 Her ling'ring step and vague ambiguous air  
 Bespoke distraction rather than despair:  
 Her harsh speech grated thro' the craggy oaks,  
 Or fell unheeded on embedded rocks;  
 Her harp was silent, and it mattered not,  
 For no kind gale could reach th' ill-fated spot;  
 And when full aiming at the vocal song,  
 She seem'd the mimic of a palsied tongue.

At length, amid the strange mysterious gloom,  
 Freedom's bold spirit shook the bolted tomb;  
 And Education usher'd into birth,  
 Rose phoenix-like, to renovate the earth.

The scene is chang'd—the scenery now appears  
 Like hope's fine portrait of prospective years—  
 That mighty skill has swept th' encumber'd soil,  
 And made it teem with honey, wine and oil;  
 Fair lilies flourish and gay tulips bud,  
 Fresh roses bloom where prickly brambles stood,  
 Tall trees are bending with perennial fruit,  
 And golden diamonds sparkle at the root;  
 Unbounded prospects in succession rise  
 On either side, and tow'r amid the skies.

See Genius now, in splendid robes array'd,  
 Expanding blossoms deck her laurel'd head;  
 Fair gems of science brighten on her brow,  
 She speaks, kings nod, and thrones and empires bow,  
 She takes the harp, and letter'd pinions bear  
 Enchanting music thro' the ambient air.

See her ascend Olympus' blazing height  
 Where fabled deities carouse in light:

Aspiring still, she aims at crowns on high,  
And seeks a passport to the upper sky;  
Obtains the grant, by Inspiration giv'n,  
And with its chart and compass, sails to heav'n,  
Scales the high walls, and in the bright abode  
Is crown'd immortal at the throne of God.

**Poem 2: The Transformation; or the Tool and the Gem**

Published in *Times and Seasons*, November 15, 1841

I saw a thing of rudest form,  
 From mountains' base brought forth—  
 A useless gem—devoid of charm,  
 And wrap'd in cumbrous earth.

Its rough exterior met the eye  
 With a repulsive show;  
 For every charm, was forc'd to lie  
 In buried depths, below.

The Sculptor came,—I wonder'd, when  
 His pliant tool was brought;  
 He pass'd it o'er the gem, and then  
 I mark'd the change it wrought.

Each cumbrance form its surface, clear'd—  
 The gem, expos'd to view—  
 Its nature and its worth appear'd—  
 Its form expansive grew.

By gentle strokes, it was set free—  
 By softer touch, refin'd;  
 Till beauty, grace and majesty,  
 Were with its nature join'd.

Its lustre kindled to a blaze—  
 'Twas Wisdom's lamp begun,  
 And soon the splendor of its rays  
 Eclips'd the noon-day sun.

That gem was chain'd in crudeness, till  
 The Sculptor, lent his aid:  
 I wonder'd at the ready skill,  
 His potent hand display'd.

But 'twas the virtue of his tool  
 Of fine, transforming edge;  
 Which serv'd for pencil, mould and rule—  
 For polisher and sledge.

The *tool* requires a skilful hand—  
 That *gem*, no charm should bind;  
 That took is *Education*, and  
 That gem, the *Human Mind*.

**Poem 3: To Parents,**

Composed winter 1854-1855; published in *The Mountaineer*, March 10, 1860

FATHERS and mothers! love for Zion's weal  
 Inspires the muse to proffer an appeal,  
 In Zion's name. Her welfare is our aim,  
 And mutual int'rest; therefore I will claim,  
 Not the indulgence of your list'ning ear,  
 Nor the vain plaudits sycophants would hear;  
 But your attention, thoughtful, calm and grave—  
 Your sober judgment I would fondly crave.

You all are stewards of what you possess:  
 You may abuse or use in righteousness;  
 And thus the children giv'n you of the Lord  
 May prove your curse, or prove a rich reward.

Early in life, is the direction giv'n  
 Which leads them down to hell or up to heav'n.  
 As outlines sketch'd in youth and infancy,  
 The manhood and womanhood will be.  
 The infant mind is like an empty cell,  
 Where good and evil find a place to dwell,  
 And may, by culture, be enlarg'd and fill'd,  
 And truth and error, one or both, instill'd.

Our bodies, thro' exertion, strength obtain—  
 By exercise, to proper growth attain:  
 Let healthy, vig'rous limbs, inertly lie,  
 How soon they perish—ultimately die!  
 And without practice too, the mental powers,  
 Weak, unsupplied with needful, useful stores;  
 Will not arrive at their diploma'd worth,  
 Nor shed their own inherent lustre forth.

We cannot pow'rs and faculties create,  
 But 'tis our province, both to cultivate;  
 And while life's busy scenes are hurrying thro',  
 The most important is the first to do;  
 And surely none can more of worth combine,  
 Than the improvement of the youthful mind.

Will ignorance—will wit and sportive glee—  
 Will nonsense qualify your sons to be  
 Your representatives to carry on  
 The work you have commenced, when you are gone?  
 In high important offices to act—  
 As Zion's judges, business to transact

In things momentous for all Israel's sake,  
With the salvation of the world at stake?

When education waits before you door—  
When her rich streams in golden currents pour;  
Altho' yourselves have not the time to sip,  
Inspire your sons and daughters too, to dip.  
Prompt them to mental service, while the mind,  
Like pliant boughs, is easily inclined—  
While they with readiness and pleasure take  
The impressions which the sculptor's chisels make.

Your sons as heralds, soon must go abroad  
To face the world—to teach the truth of God—  
The wise—the erudite of earth to meet—  
Knowledge with knowledge—mind with mind compete—  
All their attainments criticized and tried,  
Before tribunals of ungodly pride:  
Where no apologies will be received,  
And no mistakes and errors be retriev'd.

'Tis true, the Lord his Spirit does bestow,  
And thro' that medium, streams of knowledge flow:  
But when the opportunities are giv'n,  
Thro' the o'er-ruling providence of heav'n,  
For self-improvement; no one need expect  
That God will smile upon our own neglect,  
The Lord assists all those who do their part—  
The dilatory ones must feel the smart.

Would not your bowels of compassion yearn  
To think your child, in stranger lands must learn,  
By force of cruel circumstances, what  
He might have been, at home, in kindness taught?

Among the brutes, and brutish of our kind,  
The pow'r of sinew rules, instead of mind:  
Where cultivation sheds its genial ray,  
Knowledge is pow'r, and mental strength bears sway.

As fins obscure the vision of the blind,  
So ign'rance hides the lustre of the mind—  
To rude unpolish'd gems, it will compare,  
Till education stamps an impress there.

Should Zion's sons, in aught deficient be,  
That will adorn, or yield utility?

And very soon your blooming daughters will  
Their destin'd place as wives and mothers fill.



The best—the noblest boon they can receive—  
 The richest fortune, you have power to give—  
 The wealthiest patrimony under heav'n,  
 Is Education timely—wisely giv'n.  
 Not erudition's superficial gloss—  
 Its glitt'ring tinsel, and its flimsy dross,  
 Vain useless lumber—foolish, empty boast,  
 Which constitutes the braggadocia's toast.

Instead of fabled, false, fictitious glare,  
 Teach them what was—what will be, and what are;  
 Which will their minds with useful stores supply—  
 Expand, ennoble, and exalt them high,  
 Teach them the principles of life and health,  
 And make them rich with intellectual wealth:  
 As your best legacy, teach them to find,  
 By constant searchings, treasures for the mind:  
 All else will perish or elude their grasp,  
 Tho' much they cherish—tho' they fondly clasp;  
 But what they gather up of mental worth,  
 Will not forsake them when they leave the earth.

The pow'r of method students gain in school,  
 Forms a credential—constitutes a tool,  
 An operative instrument, whereby  
 Their own resources, they can self-apply.

Then, let your children be well taught in youth,  
 Upon the basis of eternal Truth—  
 Self-cultivated too, as well as taught—  
 Train'd to reflection, and inur'd to thought:  
 And both in Time, and in Eternity,  
 Your sons, as pillars, in the church, will be—  
 As chosen saviors on Mount Zion stand,  
 And sway the royal sceptre of command:  
 Your daughters too, as polish'd stones, will shine,  
 And ornament their parentage and line—  
 To grace—to dignify celestial courts,  
 Where the illustrious from all worlds resort;  
 And mingle in the high assemblies, where  
 The Holy Ones—the Gods and angels are.

**Poem 4: Man Capable of Higher Developments**

Composed February 1867; published in *Herald of Health*, April 1867

MAN'S tide of existence is fearfully chang'd—  
From God and from nature how widely estrang'd!  
Vice, dandled by custom, mock nature's designs,  
And existence is lessen'd where virtue declines.

We wake into being—how helpless at birth!  
How short, at the longest, our visit on earth!  
Too short to develop (we merely begin)  
The germ of the Deity planted within.

As a father transmits from the father to son,  
So God, our Creator, our Father has done;  
There's no attribute God, in his glorified form,  
Possesses, but man, too, inherits the germ.

Though frail and imperfect, unlearn'd and unwise  
We're endow'd with capacities needful to rise  
From our embryo state, onward, upward!—at length  
To a fullness of knowledge, of wisdom and strength.

Man becomes his own agent, with freedom to choose,  
With pow'r to accept and with pow'r to refuse;  
With a future before him, the sequel of life,  
To which this is a preface with consequence rife.

He may learn how to strengthen this life's feeble chain,  
And redeem the longevity man should obtain—  
Develop capacity, greatness and worth,  
By improving himself and improving the earth.

He should squander no talents, no health and no time;  
All, all is important—age, manhood and prime.  
As we sow we shall reap, what we earn we'll receive—  
We'll be judged by our works, not by what we believe.

We now lay the foundations for what we shall be,  
For life's current extends to Eternity's sea;  
Whatever ennobles, debases, refines,  
Around our hereafter an impress entwines.

We're the offspring of God; shall we stoop to degrade  
The form which at first in his image was made?  
To honor our beings and callings, while here,

Secures an admission to life's higher sphere.

In the likeness of Deity gracefully form'd,  
With his own noble attributes richly adorn'd;  
For a grand immortality man is design'd—  
Perfected in body, perfected in mind!

ARTICLE 2:

THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES OF ELIZA R. SNOW

## ABSTRACT

## THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES OF ELIZA R. SNOW

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Eliza R. Snow was an educator whose pedagogical practice bridged nineteenth-century didacticism with an advocacy for learners as agents. In a time when most learning consisted of rote memorization and drill, Snow consistently engaged children by providing opportunities for them to experience ownership, choice, and participation. Educators in Eliza R. Snow's time tended to be "intellectual overseers" or "drillmasters." Snow, however, was the rare teacher who became an "interpreter of culture." She clarified content, interpreted ideas, and led children in discussion.

Snow's teaching included pedagogical patterns for both classroom interaction and narrative discourse. The patterns in her narrative discourse included moralizing to underscore important points, encouraging application or present-day connection, describing events or concepts unfamiliar to her audience, and editorializing with personal insights or experiences.

Eliza R. Snow (1804–1887), Mormon poetess and general president of the Relief Society, was also an educator whose pedagogical practice bridged nineteenth-century didacticism with an advocacy for learners as agents.<sup>1</sup> In a time when most learning consisted of rote memorization and drill, Snow granted her students ownership in their own learning process and used techniques intended to help them “study the principles of the Gospel, converse on them, [and] understand them.”<sup>2</sup>

Educational historian Barbara Finkelstein’s analysis of descriptions of primary school classrooms between 1820 and 1880 revealed three patterns of instructional teaching behavior. The first pattern, “Intellectual Overseer,” referred to a teacher who made assignments and periodically tested for completion, often through catechized exercises. The “Drillmaster” asked students to repeat material to be learned without any elaboration or discussion by the teacher. The “Interpreter of Culture,” the least frequently employed pattern, described teachers who clarified content, engaged in explanation, interpreted ideas, and in rare cases involved students in discussion.<sup>3</sup>

The typical nineteenth-century educator functioned as either an intellectual overseer or drill master who expected students to memorize and recite information presented with exactness.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed overview of Snow’s life see the chapter introductions in Jill Mulvay Derr, and Karen Lynn Davidson, *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2009). See also Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “The Eliza Enigma,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 11 (Spring 1978): 30–43; and Jill Mulvay Derr, “Form and Feeling in a Carefully Crafted Life: Eliza R. Snow’s ‘Poem of Poems,’” *Journal of Mormon History* 26 (Spring 2000): 1–39.

<sup>2</sup> “An Address by Miss Eliza R. Snow Delivered in the Tabernacle, Ogden, at a Relief Society Meeting, Thursday Afternoon August 14, 1873,” *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* 36 (January 13, 1874): 20.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara J. Finkelstein, *Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in Nineteenth-Century United States*. (New York: Falmer Press, 1989), 44–5. See also Barbara J. Finkelstein, “The Moral Dimensions of Pedagogy: Teaching Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in Nineteenth-Century America,” *American Studies* 15 (Fall 1974): 81–3; and Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms 1890-1980*. (New York: Longman, Inc., 1984), 17–25.

Math and spelling were taught by drill, and writing rarely included composition.<sup>4</sup> One student's description of a typical spelling exercise from the 1820s illustrates the predominant instructional methods:

“Now what letter is this?”

The child hesitated.

“It's A,” said the master, “A, A, A! Look at it. Now tell me what it is.”

The child timidly answered, “A.”

“That's right. Remember it's A. Now what's this next letter?”<sup>5</sup>

Another student who attended school in the 1860s and 1870s recalled this organized repetition exercise where each geography line was chanted twice before proceeding:

Maine, Augusta, on the Kennebec River,

New Hampshire, Concord, is on the Merrimac River,

Vermont, Montpelier, is on the Onion River,

Massachusetts, Boston, is on the Boston Harbor,

Rhode Island has two capitals—Providence and Newport<sup>6</sup>

Broadly defined, education in nineteenth-century America encompassed “instruction and discipline. . .intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations.”<sup>7</sup> For most Americans this future station was to become a contributing member of the newly formed republic. Snow shared this value, but for her and other Latter-day Saints, life's future station also extended into

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<sup>4</sup> Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 86–91.

<sup>5</sup> Finkelstein, *Moral Dimensions*, 82.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Noah Webster's 1828 American Online, s.v. “education,” accessed October 25, 2010, <http://www.1828-dictionary.com/d/search/word.education>

the eternities where she and her students hoped to receive “immortal bodies and immortal minds.”<sup>8</sup>

Snow, designated by the Prophet Joseph Smith as “Zion’s Poetess,” chronicled the Mormon experience for sixty years. She is widely accepted as an interpreter of Latter-day Saint culture.<sup>9</sup> However, an understanding that she played a similar role as an educator has previously been overlooked. As a teacher, organizer, and writer for Latter-day Saint children, Snow did much more than clarify content, interpret ideas, and engage students in discussion. She provided students with opportunities to experience ownership, choice, and active participation in organizations that would prepare them to act in their future roles in life.

This article analyzes Eliza R. Snow’s pedagogical practices and instructional techniques, highlighting her efforts to teach children correct principles that enabled individual choice and action. First, minutes and records of the early Primary Association meetings will be presented to show Snow in her nineteenth-century classroom context and to identify pedagogical patterns for classroom interaction. Second, Snow’s writing for children, published in the *Juvenile Instructor*, will be used to identify pedagogical patterns in her narrative discourse.

### **Pedagogical Patterns in Snow’s Classroom Interaction with Primary Children**

The Primary Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the last auxiliary to be established and was designed to teach children the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Immortality,” in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 354.

<sup>9</sup> [Emmeline B. Wells], “Eliza Roxie Snow Smith’: A Tribute of Affection,” *Woman’s Exponent* 16, no. 14 (December 15, 1887): 109; Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, xv–xvi, 73–6.

<sup>10</sup> “Children in the Church,” <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/article/children-in-the-church>; For a history of the Primary Associations, see Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Stake Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979); Aurelia Spencer Rogers, *Life Sketches of Orson Spencer and Others and History of Primary Work* (Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon & Sons, 1898); Conrad A. Harward, “A History of the Growth and Development of the Primary Association of the LDS Church from 1878 to 1928” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976).



Aurelia Spencer Rogers started the first Primary in Farmington, Utah, in 1878; but it was through Eliza R. Snow's "energy and labor that Primaries were organized throughout the Territory of Utah."<sup>11</sup>

Snow counseled Primary leaders "not to make the meetings a school and become tedious."<sup>12</sup> Primary meetings were designed to be different from the already established Sunday Schools which were similar to the common schools of the day, filled with rote and drill exercises.<sup>13</sup> Primary meetings were to provide children opportunities to express themselves through testimony, song, and recitation; they were to be a place where children studied the gospel, learned to speak in public, and participated in service.<sup>14</sup>

Snow's visits to the various Primary Associations, recorded in local minute books, combine to form a descriptive literature that demonstrates Snow's classroom practices. Some Primary secretaries were meticulous in their ability to capture not just the essence but also the ebb and flow of a meeting.<sup>15</sup> Others would select one experience or story to include in their records, or simply state, "Sister Eliza then gave some good instructions to the rising generation."<sup>16</sup> The regularity in the topics and techniques recorded by the various secretaries, however, suggest that Snow had a consistent instructional approach that she used in her interaction with Primary children.

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<sup>11</sup> Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 221. See also "Review of Primary Association with Instructions," *Women's Exponent* 19, no. 11 (November 15, 1890): 83.

<sup>12</sup> St. George First Ward, St. George Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1880-86, November 29, 1889, p. 2, microfilm of holograph, Church History Library, Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church History Library).

<sup>13</sup> "Primary Improvement," *Juvenile Instructor* 14, no.1 (January 1, 1879): 10.

<sup>14</sup> Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 17-19.

<sup>15</sup> Smithfield Branch, Cache Stake, Relief Society Minutes, vol. 2, 1876-1906, July 7, 1879, p. 92, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library. In this meeting Snow commended the arduous labors of the secretary whose minutes were filled with "a spirit of humility."

<sup>16</sup> Parowan Utah Stake, Primary Minutes, vol.1, 1881-1901, March 27, 1881, p.1, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

The minutes of the first quarterly meeting of the Primary Association of Farmington in 1878 and the minutes of the organizational meeting of the Sugar House Ward Primary in 1881 served as the main source texts in this analysis of Snow’s pedagogical practice.<sup>17</sup> These meetings were selected based on the completeness of the minute records and the difference in meeting types (a conference versus an organizational meeting). In addition, as the first Primary Association in the Church to be organized, the December 1878 quarterly meeting of the Farmington Primary was also the first of its kind to be held.<sup>18</sup>

The analysis of the Farmington and Sugar House Primary minutes reveals three consistent pedagogical patterns. First, children need to have ownership of and leadership in the Primary organization. Second, children need to be given choice and the invitation to act. Third, children need opportunities to be active participants. With these three patterns identified, additional Primary meeting minutes were analyzed for recurring examples of their use.

### **Ownership and Leadership**

In the Sugar House Primary “the meeting was called to order by Sr. Eliza R. Snow Smith who said (addressing the children), this is your meeting and I want you all to do your share.”<sup>19</sup> The secretary’s parenthetical comment that Snow spoke directly to the children underscores the fact that even though adults were present, the focus of the Primary meeting was on, and for, the children.

In the Farmington Primary, Snow reminded the children, who had been organized for several months, that Primary “is your little meeting, you come here to worship God. God sees

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<sup>17</sup> Farmington Ward, Davis Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1878–88, December 7, 1878, p. 15-18, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library; Sugar House Ward, Sugar House Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1881–1900, June 29, 1881, p. 1–5, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>18</sup> See Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Sugar House Ward, Primary Minutes, 1.

you and did you know that holy angels are here!”<sup>20</sup> Snow encouraged the children to always attend their meetings and asked all those who liked to attend Primary to raise their hands. “All hands were up.”<sup>21</sup>

Whenever Snow met with children she consistently reminded them that Primary was their meeting.<sup>22</sup> Emmeline B. Wells, a leading sister who often traveled with Snow, noted that Primary met a need Sunday Schools had not filled. Primary was a place where “the very young could express themselves to each other.”<sup>23</sup> Snow echoed this observation after attending a special meeting of 250 children where “they expressed themselves glad to have an organization of their own, so they would not be afraid to speak.”<sup>24</sup>

The Primary organizations provided leadership opportunities for “boys and girls nearly grown to manhood and womanhood.” Snow wrote of one meeting where older youths led the singing, dismissed the meeting and offered the opening prayer. She noted that one boy who was not prepared with a recitation rose and “made a very nice extempore speech.” In this meeting Snow saw a purpose of the organization being fulfilled as the boys and girls prepared “themselves for future usefulness and honor.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Choice and Invitations to Act**

Snow’s efforts to allow children choice gave added meaning to the concept of ownership. Before proceeding to organize a Primary, Snow would first ask the children if they desired to be

<sup>20</sup> Farmington Ward, Primary Minutes, 15.

<sup>21</sup> Farmington Ward, Primary Minutes, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Washington Branch, St. George Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1880–87, November 19, 1880, p. 16, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library. See also “R.S. Reports,” *Women’s Exponent* 7, no. 9 (October 1, 1878): 66; “R.S. Reports (Morgan Stake),” *Women’s Exponent* 8, no. 14 (December 15, 1879): 110.

<sup>23</sup> “Home Affairs,” *Woman’s Exponent* 8, no. 16 (January 15, 1880): 124.

<sup>24</sup> “R. S. Reports,” *Women’s Exponent* 7, no. 9 (October 1, 1878): 66.

<sup>25</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Visit to the South Willow Creek Primary Annual Meeting,” *Women’s Exponent* 11, no. 10 (October 15, 1882): 74. See also Emmeline B. Wells, “Report of Trip to Sanpete and Juab Counties with Eliza R. Snow,” *Women’s Exponent* 9, no. 4 (July 15, 1880): 29.

organized, which was often answered by a raise of the hand or a vote.<sup>26</sup> Children were asked whom they wished to have as their president and on at least one occasion Snow added she would not select anyone the children did not want.<sup>27</sup> In one organizational meeting the children did not respond when Snow asked who should be their president, but “answered in the affirmative” when asked if they “would sustain whom the bishop would appoint.”<sup>28</sup>

These organizational meetings illustrate Snow’s ability not only to teach the principle of choice but also to provide opportunities for children to practice choosing. In a reorganization of the Santaquin Primary, Snow taught the children how to vote for their own officers. The names of all who had previously been members were then “voted in as members under the new organization giving the children an opportunity to exercise their new skill.”<sup>29</sup> In the Sugar House Primary the secretary, assistant secretary, and treasurer—all young Primary members—were “chosen and voted in by the children.”<sup>30</sup> A standard practice at the beginning of each Primary meeting was to read and approve the previous meeting’s minutes. A bishop counseled the Primary children in his ward to “always pay attention when the minutes are being read so that when you approve them you may know what you do approve.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Virgin City Ward, St. George Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1881–93, January 6, 1881, p. 1; Pine Valley Ward, St. George Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1880–83, p. 3; Big Cottonwood Ward, Granite Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1881–84, May 22, 1881, p. 1; Twenty-first Ward, Emigration Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1881–83, May 18, 1881, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Santaquin Ward, Nebo Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1878–80, November 15, 1879, p. 58, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>28</sup> Washington Branch, Primary Minutes, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Santaquin Ward, Primary Minutes, 58; See also Thirteenth Ward, Ensign Stake, vol. 1, 1879–83, April 2, 1879, 3, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>30</sup> Sugar House Ward, Primary Minutes, 3. See also Seventh Ward, Pioneer Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1882–86, January 4, 1882, p. 1, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library; Virgin City Ward, Primary Minutes, 2; Santaquin Ward, Primary Minutes, 58; Pine Valley Ward, Primary Minutes, 3–4; Thirteenth Ward, Primary Minutes, 3; Scipio Ward, Millard Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1880–84, November 9, 1880, p. 1, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>31</sup> Twelfth East Ward, University West Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1879–85, April 18, 1883, 151, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

Snow's enabling of choice demonstrated a faith and respect for the children's capacity to think and make decisions. During the Sugar House meeting, Snow repeatedly emphasized child ownership and choice as she asked the children what exercises they would include in their meetings, whether they would sing, and whether they would pray. While these questions may be interpreted as rhetorical, in the Thirteenth Ward organizational meeting Snow "required the children to select their own hymns" and the minutes record that children also voted on how often their meetings would be held.<sup>32</sup>

In a poem written to children, Snow encouraged them to "be very careful what you choose / and careful too, what you refuse."<sup>33</sup> A verse from another poem included in the *Recitations for the Primary Associations in Poetry, Dialogues, and Prose, vol. 2*, for children ages ten to fifteen more fully explains why choices must be carefully made:

Man becomes his own agent, with freedom to choose,  
 With pow'r to accept and with pow'r to refuse  
 With a future before him, the sequel of life,  
 To which this is a preface with consequence rife.<sup>34</sup>

### **Active Participation**

Active participation by children in Primary meetings was closely associated with ownership and choice. Primary members would be asked to sing, pray, answer questions, recite prose or poetry, and write essays.<sup>35</sup> Snow encouraged children to always respond to invitations

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<sup>32</sup> Thirteenth Ward, Primary Minutes, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Eliza R. Snow, "Gold and Tinsel," in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 383.

<sup>34</sup> Eliza R. Snow, "Man Capable of Higher Development," in Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, poem 380.

<sup>35</sup> Sugar House Ward, Primary Minutes, 4; For essays written by Primary children see "Primary Improvement" *Juvenile Instructor* 14, no.1 (January 1, 1879): 10.

to speak even if they could only say a few words.<sup>36</sup> In one instance Snow noted the lack of participation in testimony bearing by the children. She requested that the president ask two boys and two girls to prepare to bear their testimonies in the next meeting.<sup>37</sup>

Snow encouraged active participation in the content of Primary meetings by teaching principles illustrated with true stories and by defining concepts her learners might not understand. Snow asked the children in Sugar House what prayer was. She then explained that prayer was “talking with God” and taught the children how to “close [their] eyes and lean [their] heads a little forward.” The lesson ended with an invitation for the children to act in this manner as they joined in prayer to close the meeting.<sup>38</sup>

Snow often used this method of stating a principle, explaining or illustrating the principle, and then inviting children to act upon the principle as she taught the significance of the word amen. Snow would tell children she wanted to hear everyone say “amen” at the end of the prayer. “What does amen mean?” she would ask. “So be it” was the response. Snow would then repeat her request that everyone offer “a hearty amen. That the heavens may know that you pray.”<sup>39</sup>

Prayer as a form of active participation was powerfully taught by Snow as she shared an incident from the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She related to the children in Farmington that once when the Prophet needed a guard to protect him from his enemies he “overheard children praying in turn one after another that he might be spared. He said to the Brethren you may go to

<sup>36</sup> Twelfth East Ward, Primary Minutes, 150. See also Oxford-Clifton Ward, Oneida Stake, Primary Minutes, August 9, 1879, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Levan Ward, Juab Stake, Primary Minutes, 1879–1883, October 23, 1882, p. 150, photocopy of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

<sup>38</sup> Sugar House Ward, Primary Minutes, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Farmington Ward, Primary Minutes, March 6, 1880, p.73. See also Virgin City Ward, Primary Minutes, 1.

bed, I am safe for tonight.” Having expressed this confidence in the faith and prayers of children, Snow then requested that the children pray for Sister Rogers, their Primary president.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to Primary being a vehicle for the active participation of children in the support of their own organization, active participation extended to other Church programs. Snow told children in Sugar House that the Primaries of Morgan County were saving money to emigrate an orphan from Europe. She then suggested that if the children had ten cents given to them for candy, they could save five cents to donate to the Primary.<sup>41</sup> Children in Goshen were encouraged to reserve some of their candy money for temple donations.<sup>42</sup> In the Washington Primary members were asked to contribute five cents to pay for stationery, and those in Scipio were requested to give five cents or an egg to purchase record books for the secretary and treasurer.<sup>43</sup>

Children’s active participation also involved the use of practical skills. In 1880, the advent of Primary fairs provided children with opportunities to display and sell their handiwork with proceeds going to support their local Primary associations.<sup>44</sup> Snow told children in Virgin that making items to display at a Primary fair would “arouse [their] inventive or creative powers.”<sup>45</sup> Some wards also involved children in growing and storing beans to complement the

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<sup>40</sup> Farmington Ward, Primary Minutes, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Sugar House Ward, Primary Minutes, 3; See also “Springville Primary,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 13 (December 1, 1881): 103.

<sup>42</sup> Goshen Ward, Santaquin-Tintic Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 2, 1870–81, November 15, 1879, p. 40, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library; See also “Home Affairs,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 7 (September 1, 1881): 52.

<sup>43</sup> Washington Ward, Primary Minutes, November 27, 1880, p. 19; Scipio Ward, Primary Minutes, November 13, 1880, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 224–7; Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 21–22, 181.

<sup>45</sup> Virgin City Ward, Primary Minutes, 1.

Relief Society grain storage initiative.<sup>46</sup> A report of the Primary Association of the Sanpete Stake summarizes the good works Primary participation encouraged in Latter-day Saint children:

They have gathered \$2.40 for the temple, and are now improving the opportunity of gleaning wheat to reserve for famine. They have also remembered Sister E.R. Snow's instructions to plant white beans, and have acted upon it, and each member is to give a quart this fall to add to their store of grain. They are preparing for famine with all the ambition and energy that the humming bee, or ant, does for winter.<sup>47</sup>

For Snow “usefulness constitute[d] greatness” and the three pedagogical patterns she employed in her work with children—ownership and leadership, choice with invitations to act, and active participation—encouraged individual choice and enabled meaningful contributions.<sup>48</sup> In addition to these pedagogical patterns expressed in her classroom interaction with children, Snow also incorporated related principles in her writing.

### **Pedagogical Patterns in Snow's Writing for Children**

Over a decade before Snow's involvement in the establishment of the Primary Associations, she taught and interpreted Latter-day Saint culture for Mormon children as she wrote specifically to them. Her largest body of writing for children was first published beginning in 1866 in the *Juvenile Instructor*, a semi-monthly newspaper for youth in the Utah Territory. Snow was the *Juvenile Instructor's* “most outstanding female” writer and a “conspicuous

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<sup>46</sup> Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 219–20.

<sup>47</sup> “R. S. Reports,” *Woman's Exponent* 8, no. 9 (October 1, 1879): 66.

<sup>48</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Simplicity,” *Woman's Exponent* 6, no.1 (June 1, 1877): 6.



contributor” who would eventually have published over twenty poems; some forty stories, historical accounts or prose pieces; and numerous hymns.<sup>49</sup>

The goals for the paper expressed by founder George Q. Cannon echo recurrent themes in Snow’s own educational vision for Latter-day Saint children and youth.

No other community, with which we are acquainted, indulge in such high hopes respecting their young as do the inhabitants of this Territory. The most sanguine expectations are entertained in relation to the great future which awaits them. . . . But to have these hopes and expectations gratified, steps should be taken to train our children and to do all in our power to prepare them for the duties that will devolve upon them. It is to aid in this work and to supply a want which has been long felt to exist that the publication of this paper has been undertaken.<sup>50</sup>

As early as 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation regarding “the selecting and writing of books for schools in [the] church, that little children also may receive instruction” (D&C 55:4). Both Cannon and Snow would have had access to this directive in the 1860s and may have attended the general conference of the Church in October 1845 where W.W. Phelps responded to a question about the progress of books for children.

By revelation, in 1831, I was appointed to do the work of printing . . . and writing books for schools in this church, that little children might receive instruction . . . . We will instruct our children in the paths of righteousness; and we want that instruction compiled

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<sup>49</sup> Jill Mulvay Derr, “Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Mormon Primaries,” *Charles Redd Monographs in Western History* 10 (1980): 76; Lawrence R. Flake, “The Development of the Juvenile Instructor under George Q. Cannon and Its Functions in Latter-Day Saint Religious Education” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969): 69.

<sup>50</sup> George Q. Cannon, “Editorial,” *Juvenile Instructor* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1866): 3.

in a book. Moved that W. W. Phelps write some books for the use of children; seconded and carried.<sup>51</sup>

There is no evidence that Phelps ever fulfilled this charge to write books for the instruction of Latter-day Saint children.<sup>52</sup> The *Juvenile Instructor*, however, was perhaps a first step in response to a prophetically defined need to shore up Zion's youth and "adorn their minds with those principles which will tend to elevate and ennoble them, and prepare them for future usefulness in the kingdom of our God."<sup>53</sup>

Snow's efforts to teach correct principles to enhance individual choice and action in her classroom practice with children, was also a strong element in her writing for children. Her tendency toward morally didactic discourse prevalent in the nineteenth century may have been related to the "intense anxiety" she felt for youth to "be wisely employed...with a reference to future results!"<sup>54</sup> In a letter printed in the *Juvenile Instructor*, Snow wrote this reply to a young correspondent:

Now while you are very young, is the time to lay the foundation for yourself, that you may become a wise and useful woman... There is a great deal of good to be done, and little girls as well as little boys, should be preparing themselves to do it.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Joseph Smith, et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, edited by B.H. Roberts, 7 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948 printing), 7: 474.

<sup>52</sup> Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 86–88, 140–41.

<sup>53</sup> "Speech by E. R. Snow," *Woman's Exponent* 19, no. 21 (May 1, 1891):167. This speech was addressed to the Sugar House Ward Relief Society on July 29, 1868.

<sup>54</sup> Eliza R. Snow, "To the Young Sisters in Provo," *Woman's Exponent* 2, no. 22 (April 15, 1874): 170. For a discussion of nineteenth-century moral didacticism in children's literature see Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 87–98.

<sup>55</sup> Eliza R. Snow, "Letter to Eliza R. Alexander," *Juvenile Instructor* 1, no. 9 (May 1, 1866): 34.

For Snow, a foundation of correct principles and doctrinal understanding were essential to inform choice and future action. While moral didacticism was a prevalent literary convention in Snow's prose, she also used other rhetorical methods to help her readers reflect upon and fully understand the messages she wished to convey.

Great teachers understand the power of narrative. Snow recognized the importance of using engaging but true stories and incorporated them in her written and verbal discourse. The instructional quality of her written narratives was enhanced as she: (1) editorialized or provided personal insight, (2) moralized, or highlighted important messages, (3) made a present-day connection or application, and (4) defined or described unfamiliar terms and concepts. These four pedagogical patterns are illustrated in a series of articles Snow wrote on the biblical prophet Daniel.

First, Snow begins the story of Daniel with this editorial comment:

When I was a small child, I often teased my mother to tell stories, and nothing pleased me better than for her to tell me a story as a reward for doing my little tasks well; but I remember I always wanted to know that the stories that I listened to were true.<sup>56</sup>

Second, Snow moralized what she deemed most valuable for her young audience. In the paragraph following the editorial introduction, Snow restates the importance of telling true stories. "There are plenty of true stories, and truth is much more interesting than falsehood, while truth is worth remembering and falsehood is not."<sup>57</sup>

Third, as Snow continued her introduction of Daniel, she invited the reader to make a present-day connection with the story.

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<sup>56</sup> Eliza R. Snow, "The Story of Daniel," *Juvenile Instructor* 1, no. 6 (March 15, 1866): 24.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

It was many hundred years ago that Daniel lived; if you would like to know where he lived, if those of you who have atlases will take the trouble to look on the map of the eastern hemisphere...you will find the City of Jerusalem...the home of this prophet.<sup>58</sup>

Fourth, the last pedagogical pattern Snow used consistently in her writing was to define terms or describe contexts unfamiliar to her audience. “The people who lived in Judea were called Jews, or Israelites, and they were the people of God, because they worshipped God, and believed in prophets.”<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps the most powerful pedagogical pattern Snow incorporated in both her teaching and writing was her enhancement of stories or instructions with doctrinal insights, personal interpretations, and life experiences. For example, in a series on the history of Jesus she recounts the temptation of the Savior, as recorded in Matthew 4:9. Snow described how the devil took Jesus to a high mountain and promised to give Jesus all things if Jesus would worship him. Snow’s added insight, obvious to an adult but not a child, was that the devil was not the owner of the things he promised to give.<sup>60</sup>

In another article on the experience of the Latter-day Saints in Far West, Missouri, Snow includes the family watch-dog in her narrative.

Jack was highly prized by all the family, and although a dog, he was worthy of respect, because he was a true friend...and when we knew that we were surrounded by mobocrats, we could lie down at night, feeling pretty safe, knowing that no one could approach the house, until the faithful dog had given the alarm...Our Missouri neighbors

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “History of Jesus, Chapter 2” *Juvenile Instructor* 2, no. 15 (August 1, 1867): 118; all eighteen chapters originally printed as a *Juvenile Instructor* series were published as *The Story of Jesus* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945).

(if I may call those neighbors who were plotting our destruction) saw that Jack was true to us, and they were afraid of him, and tried to entice him away, but when they found it impossible to coax him to leave us, they shot him.<sup>61</sup>

Through the use of the family pet, Snow was able to engage her readers in a true experience that was dark and perhaps difficult for children living in the safety of the Salt Lake Valley to comprehend. Snow would include this incident of Far West some fifteen years later when she wrote the biography of her brother Lorenzo. She would not, however, name “Jack” nor use him as a way to moralize about the importance of true friends. This technique she reserved for her teaching of children.

The pedagogical patterns Snow used in her writing were also effective in the stories she shared as she met with Primary children. The patterns are not as easily identified in her verbal discourse based on the brevity of recorded minutes and the language ability of the secretary. In a district conference of Primary Associations in the Cache Stake in 1885, Snow’s testimony of Jesus Christ was recorded in a moralizing tone. “Jesus died for the sins of the world and that he would come again on the earth and if we live as we are taught to live we can have the privledge [sic] of receiving his blessings.”<sup>62</sup> The next line in the minutes illustrates Snow’s follow-up to a moralistic teaching with an editorial comment or experience. The secretary recorded:

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<sup>61</sup> Eliza R. Snow, “Little Incidents, for Little Readers,” *Juvenile Instructor* 1, no. 21 (November 1, 1866): 83. See also Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow: One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1884): 28.

<sup>62</sup> Logan Utah Cache Stake, Primary Minutes, vol. 1, 1881–1911, October 24, 1885, p. 28–29, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church History Library.

Told us of the visit to Jeruselem [sic] where our Savior was crucified and to Bethlehem where our Saviour [sic] was born and on the Mount of Olives where he gave his disciples many good instructions.<sup>63</sup>

The visit to Jerusalem refers to a nine-month journey Snow took to Palestine in 1872–73 with her brother Lorenzo, George A. Smith of the First Presidency, and others.<sup>64</sup> One can easily imagine an audience captivated by the rich narrative of these personal stories.

Snow concludes her account of her visit to Jerusalem with a present-day application for her learners with a doctrinal aside.

Said she wished we could relize [sic] that our Savior died for us and while we are trying to do right not to smoke, be truthful obey our parents attend our meetings and always be punctual for angels are in our midst we can not see them but some day the Lord will touch our eyes so we could see reserected [sic] beings.<sup>65</sup>

### **Pedagogical Instructions to Leaders of Children**

Snow was an interpreter of culture not only for the children she organized into Primaries or spoke to through the printed word, but also for the Primary leaders. She spent time assisting new Primary officers “in carrying out the counsel given by which to conduct the meetings.”<sup>66</sup> The record does not state what “counsel” Snow gave but does support the idea she shared her pedagogical practices with local leaders, as evidenced by the consistency found in the recorded minutes of the various Primary Associations.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Derr and Davidson, *Complete Poetry*, 823–4; see also Eliza R. Snow, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists, Comprising a Series of Letters* (New York: Arno Press, 1977).

<sup>65</sup> Logan Utah Cache Stake, Primary Minutes, 29.

<sup>66</sup> Emmeline B. Wells, “Pen Sketch of an Illustrious Woman,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 10 (October 15, 1881): 73.

Between 1880 and 1882 Snow compiled the first Primary curriculum consisting of a hymnbook, a tune book, two volumes of recitations, and a bible catechism. In the preface of *Recitations for the Primary Associations in Poetry, Dialogues, and Prose*, Snow included “A Few Hints to Presiding Officers” that provides a glimpse into her educational thought. While not presented as her official pedagogical practice, the wide distribution of Snow’s Primary books allowed her thinking to extend beyond her physical reach.

Snow wrote that recitations “cultivate the heart and intellect,” improve children’s manners, and assist them in “acquiring the art of reading.” She encouraged memorization of short pieces that had been explained to children “so as to be fully understood.” Snow called it “worse than useless to crowd the young mind with that which it is not capable of comprehending.”<sup>67</sup>

In these brief statements Snow demonstrates how techniques used by drill masters and intellectual overseers can be ready tools for the skillful hand of a cultural interpreter. The pedagogical patterns used by Snow in her narrative discourse—editorializing, moralizing, defining, and making application—all combine to increase a learner’s comprehension and understanding. In other words, memorization without understanding is not learning. For Snow, effective teachers emphasize skill (how) and quality (how well) of student learning, not the amount of content memorized or taught.

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<sup>67</sup> Eliza R. Snow, preface to *Recitations for the Primary Associations in Poetry, Dialogues, and Prose No. 2: Adapted to the Capacities of Members from the Age of Ten to Fifteen Years*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, Printers and Publishers, 1882).

## Conclusion

Teaching practices are linked to an educator's ideas about child development, classroom authority, and the role or purpose of the school.<sup>68</sup> Snow saw her students as eternal beings with a divine capacity to learn. She saw them as agents who needed opportunities to choose in order for their minds to be expanded and refined. Snow recognized that a student's capacity and usefulness were developed through improving one's self and extending outward in service to others.

The pedagogical patterns Snow used to achieve these educational goals were simple yet powerful. She created classroom experiences where student ownership, choice, and active participation were operative forces not rhetorical verbiage. Snow taught correct principles to prepare learners to be ready to act. The pedagogical patterns evident in her narrative discourse, whether written or verbal, expressed deepened understanding and engaged her learners in critical thought.

Two months before Eliza R. Snow died, Elder Wilford Woodruff reaffirmed the educational purpose of the auxiliary organizations. Speaking specifically to Primary leaders, he commended them for "arousing interest in the little ones and in teaching them in simple style those lessons which are adapted to their understanding."<sup>69</sup> Elder Woodruff's words reaffirmed Snow's work as an educator. Her simple style, manifest in the pedagogical patterns she employed, transcended the typical teacher of her time.

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<sup>68</sup> Cuban, *How Teachers Taught*, 10.

<sup>69</sup> Wilford Woodruff, "An Epistle to the Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day Saints," *Woman's Exponent* 16 no.10 (October 15, 1887): 73. At the time this epistle was given, Elder Woodruff was the senior Apostle and presiding leader of the Church following the death of President John Taylor on July 25, 1887.



## Appendix A

### Methods

Over twenty sources were reviewed on doing historical research with a specific focus on historical research in education. Finklestein's (1989) work on the analysis of pedagogical practice as opposed to the traditional emphasis on pedagogical ideas and policy encouraged my search for primary sources that showed Snow in the act of teaching. Cuban's (1984) work on how teachers taught in American classrooms between 1890-1980 also helped to understand the educational thinking of the time, along with the departures Snow inculcated in her methods.

With no prescribed methodology for conducting historical research, Ary, Jacobs, & Razvich. (1990) and Gall, et al. (2010) coalesce around a series of iterative steps to facilitate the research process. The steps include 1) source identification, 2) validation of sources, and 3) interpretation of the historical data. This simple framework was employed as data were collected and analyzed.

Secondary sources refer to books and articles written by historians or researchers on a given topic. Unlike many research approaches, historical research focuses on the discovery of data instead of the creation of it. Historical research generally begins with an immersion in secondary sources to solidify research questions and to identify primary source material (Tuchman, 1994; Gall, et al., 2010). Finding data on the life and labors of Eliza R. Snow was greatly facilitated by the rich secondary source material available. The primary sources cited in the various research articles and books served as a gateway to the personal writings of Snow and the recorded accounts of those who had interactions with her.

Careful consideration was made in determining when to accept information from a secondary source and when to consult a primary source. These decisions were influenced by the reputation of the secondary source author, the congruence of interpretive frameworks between

the secondary source author and mine as the researcher, and the probability of access to the primary source materials (Gall et al., 2010, p.437).

Primary sources refer to items containing historical data on the research topic. For this study on the educational contributions of Eliza R. Snow, the primary sources consulted included both historical documents and records. Historical documents refer to information prepared for personal use, where historical records are prepared for official or public purposes (Tuchman, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Gall, et al., 2010). The documents used included diaries and limited personal correspondence. The historical records accessed included newspapers, magazines, memoirs, poetry, curriculum materials and minutes from the meetings of Relief Society, Young Ladies Mutual Improvement and Primary association meetings.

The Harold B. Lee Library's digital collections provided electronic access to historic newspapers and 19<sup>th</sup> century publications enabling research and printing of record sources. The Special Collection Archives of Brigham Young University also provided access to copies of curricular materials written by Snow for the Primary Association. The Church History Library, in the Family and Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was the repository of the records of auxiliary association minutes.

Gall, et al. (2010) suggest that "historical sources are valid to the extent that they are authentic and contain accurate information" (p.438). Primary source authenticity and accuracy are evaluated through external and internal criticism (Ary, et al., 1990; Gall et al., 2010; Gay, 1996).

External criticism (establishing authenticity of primary source material) was determined based on source location and source citation in the literature. The main primary sources used in this study—minutes and records of the auxiliary organizations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and nineteenth-century newspaper accounts—are part of collections at major

research libraries. Given the protocols and scrutiny of archival collections and the inclusion of the materials in abundant secondary sources, no further steps to prove authenticity were taken.

Internal criticism (determining accuracy of information) of primary source materials requires judging both the reasonableness of the author's statements and the trustworthiness of the author. "Reasonableness" in the accounts reporting Snow's words and actions was evaluated as each source was analyzed. If a given author conveyed a markedly different portrayal of Snow than recorded in other source materials, Gall's, et al. (2010) criteria for assessing trustworthiness were considered. Was the author present at the event being described? Was that author an observer or a participant? What were the author's qualifications to accurately describe the event? What was her emotional involvement in the event? Did the author have a vested interest in the outcomes of the event?

## Appendix B

### Literature Review Process

Inasmuch as the two articles included in this dissertation are essentially reviews of literature, this appendix describes my rationale, process, and approach to reviewing the literature.

Cantor and Schneider (1967) suggest that scholars must learn history before they can write history, and they recommend becoming acquainted with “the varieties of history offered by the hundreds of writers whose books constitute the major secondary literature in the subject” (p.97). In order to gain this familiarity with the Eliza R. Snow’s historical period, I read all existing secondary sources I could locate that focused on her. Many of these are included in the Bibliography immediately following this appendix.

### **Secondary Source Material**

Snow’s life and work have been well documented. Over forty-four secondary sources were consulted to establish what researchers have surmised from the primary sources extant. Historians Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Jill Mulvay Derr have done the majority of the research on Snow and their work provides a rich historical context and narrative. Derr and Davidson’s (2009) recent compilation of Snow’s complete poetic works enabled easy access to over five hundred poems with accompanying historical background for each poem. My extensive reading of secondary source materials clarified many aspects of Snow's life still ripe for investigation and helped frame this analysis of Snow's work as an educator.

An investigation of twenty-five historical works focused on nineteenth-century education in the United States, and specifically within the Utah territory. While Snow did teach school as a means of support at various times in her adult life, her educational focus was on the spiritual education of youth and children. Her educational philosophies and practices, however, have merit for future analysis and study in any educational context.

In my research, I also read biographies about three prominent nineteenth-century female educators: Catharine Beecher, Margaret Fuller and Julia Richman (Berrol, 1993; Cross, 1965; White, 2003). Beecher established schools for women, wrote on educational topics and had a broad audience in the eastern United States by virtue of her writing and family ties. Fuller was a philosopher, activist and non-traditional adult educator who claimed an elite group of associates that included Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Richman, a generation younger than the other women, spent her life as a teacher and administrator in the New York City schools and was actively involved in the Jewish immigrant community. These biographies were important for understanding Snow's educational thinking in the context of her time.

### **Primary Source Material**

The primary sources reviewed for this dissertation, and described in more detail below, included:

- Eighty of Snow's 507 published poems
- Approximately 110 original holographs of auxiliary meeting minutes
- One hundred eighty issues of the *Woman's Exponent* from 1872 to 1887
- Five volumes comprising the first Primary Curriculum written by Snow
- Thirty-four issues of the *Juvenile Instructor*

It is not mere coincidence that those familiar with the name of Eliza R. Snow know her as a poet or authoress of hymn texts. In her lifetime Snow published two volumes of poetry that included about half of the five hundred plus poems she composed. Snow was also the only woman among the six authors with ten or more hymn texts in the current Latter-day Saint hymnal. Snow's poetry is "singular for its social, historical and linguistic record of the first six decades of Mormonism" (Derr & Davidson, 2009, p. xvi). With no existent diary after 1849, Snow's poetry became the starting place to search for educational themes. Four source texts were identified and analyzed for

philosophical principles which were then validated in other Snow discourse. Interestingly, the poems were written in ten-year increments, the first composed in 1830 five years before Snow joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The last poem was composed in 1867, shortly before Snow would begin a twenty-year labor of reestablishing and organizing Church auxiliaries for women, youth and children.

The minutes and records of meetings of Relief Society, Young Ladies Mutual Improvement and Primary Improvement Association proved to be key sources. I studied and created typescripts of over one hundred microfilmed meeting minute holographs from auxiliary organizations in which Snow participated from 1867-1887. By the late 1860's the record of Snow's activities are "found primarily in documents other than her poems (Davidson and Derr, 2009). Her public discourse, especially the minutes of meetings where Snow interacted with youth provide insights not only into what Snow taught but how she taught it (Derr, 1996). A sampling of the recorded minutes of Snow's remarks to Relief Society, Young Women and Primary organizations provides glimpses of Snow's educational philosophy in practice. Snow advised that meeting minutes "should comprise everything worthy of preservation, and in as concise a manner as practicable" (Snow, 1882). By extension, Snow's words preserved in these records provide an educational precedent or pattern that illuminate Snow's efforts as an educator. It is the recorded minutes that enable us to check Snow's philosophy against classroom practice.

Accounts of Snow's labors throughout the Utah Territory were also published in the *Woman's Exponent*, a bi-monthly newspaper written for and by Mormon women. Each issue of the paper, beginning in June 1872 until Snow's death in December 1887, was searched for accounts of Snow's written and verbal discourse. The *Exponent* provided the data used to create a timeline of Snow's labors and travels in order to verify and search for additional information in

the original minute books and records. References for some of the 180 issues researched for this study appear in the following bibliography and in the footnotes in the individual articles.

In addition to her two volumes of poetry, Snow published five volumes for use in the Primary Associations, a family biography, and a collection of letters from those she traveled with to Palestine. Snow also contributed pieces to the *Juvenile Instructor*, a semi-monthly newspaper for youth in the Utah Territory. All of these primary sources were read and reviewed in search of glimpses into Snow's educational thought and process.

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