

RUNNING HEAD: The Great Experiment

The Great Experiment:
The Transition of the Michigan State Normal School, 1849-1899

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Introduction

In the middle of what is today Eastern Michigan University (EMU) stands a small one-room schoolhouse. Brought to EMU in 1986, it was moved to the campus “to offer testimony” to the university’s normal school heritage and teacher preparation roots (Gwaltney, 2001, p. 4). Founded in 1849, The Michigan State Normal School would be the first such school outside the original 13 colonies, the fifth normal school in the country, and the first to offer a four-year curriculum leading to a bachelor’s degree. As one stands in front of this nostalgic icon to America’s educational past, surrounded by the hustle and bustle of a modern multi-purpose university, one might be inclined to see the transformation of the MSNS as the evolution of an institution “to greater levels of professional sophistication” until it arrived as an equal among colleges and universities (Herbst, 1980, p. 219). Instead, the story of MSNS’s transition from a quasi-secondary school into a college-level institution suggests that the forces which directed the transformation were not driven by a desire to improve the quality of teacher preparation; rather, they served to undermine the potential of a single purpose institution in the pursuit of self-interests.

Statehood and Teacher Preparation

For the men who met to draft the new state’s constitution in 1834, the subject of education was seen as a matter of great importance. “In laying the foundation of a new state,” the state’s first Superintendent of Public Instruction, John Pierce, (1836) wrote, “it is all important to provide for...the education of every individual” (p. 15). The early leaders of education in Michigan believed, “As is the teacher, so is the school” (Sawyer, 1841, p. 247). In Pierce’s report to the State Legislature in 1836, he noted that “The only material defect of the system is the want of competent teachers...Without competent teachers, the most perfect system of external organization must be powerless—must certainly fail accomplishing its object. (p. 42-43).

In the northeast, a public-school movement had emerged in the 1820s, which championed the “advancement of education, especially in common schools” (in Ripa, 1997, p. 89). With the majority of the new state’s leadership having been educated in the colleges of New England and the first ten Superintendents of Public Instruction in Michigan all natives of New England, the educational developments in the northeast had a profound influence on the future of education in Michigan. In addition to the public-school movement gaining momentum in the northeast, reports praising the Prussian system of education and recommending the implementation of a modified version in the United States influenced the system of education adopted by the new state. Pierce (1836) proclaimed, “The great thing that has rendered the Prussian system so popular,” was the concept of the normal school for the professional preparation of teachers (p. 23).

However, when he issued his report on the system of education to be adopted by the state he did not advocate for the establishment of a normal school. Rather, he recommended that the branches proposed for the new university be established as an intermediate grade of schooling. These schools, situated between the primary schools and the university, “should be for the qualifying of teachers for their work, as well as that of preparing young men for University courses, and others for the ordinary business of life” (Pierce, 1868, p. 105).

University Branches

As part of Pierce’s plan for a state system of public education the branches were to serve three distinct purposes: prepare students for entrance into the main University, provide instruction in the agricultural sciences, and prepare teachers for the common schools. In spite of

these stated functions, none of the branches ever formed departments for the study of the agricultural sciences, and the efforts at teacher preparation would prove to be disappointing. In 1842, just four years after the first branches were established, the University of Michigan Regents reported that the expense of maintaining the branches “was greatly disproportioned to the benefits accruing there from” (Gowery, 1880, p. 42). In 1846, it was decided that no further appropriation could be made to the branches “without seriously trenching upon the resources and limiting, in a degree, the usefulness, and even endangering the success of the present institution” (Regents’ Proceedings, 1846, p. 1). With the abandonment of the branches in the 1840s, and the constitutional changes in 1850, the University severed its links to the primary schools of the state. While the University of Michigan would continue to exert influence over the nature of the common schools through its direction of the curriculum to prepare students for the University, it would not participate in the preparation of primary school teachers.

The exclusion of primary teacher preparation from the University was justified by two principles then prevalent among education leaders in America. First, was what became known as the “Tappan Principle.” In his writings, University of Michigan President Henry Tappan had asserted that teachers needed an educational background that terminated at a level above that which they would later teach (Tappan, 1853). Second, it was widely believed that broad culture and subject matter preparation sufficiently prepared one to successfully teach in higher education and advanced forms of schooling. Consequently, professors and teachers of advanced levels of schooling would derive their professional status from the disciplines within which they would be trained, while primary school teachers required only rudimentary academic preparation, at a level far below that of an undergraduate. From this perspective, the training of primary schoolteachers was to remain firmly in the world of elementary schooling, apart from the hallowed halls of the University.

Teachers’ Institutes

While Pierce’s successors repeatedly asserted that something should be done to improve the quality of teachers, rather than recommend the establishment of a normal school they suggested that teachers’ associations and institutes would provide the teachers needed for the common schools of the state. These institutes drew their genesis from the earliest attempts to train primary school teachers at the turn of the nineteenth century. Teachers and educational leaders had begun to recognize the difficulty of a sustained course of instruction for most students and began to assert that “the facilities for preparation be brought to the aspirant teachers rather than the reverse” (Mattingly, 1975, p. 41). Teachers attending these “traveling teachers’ seminaries” received instruction in the subjects of the common schools and lectures on the theory and practice of teaching. “By the late 1840s, institutes were the most prevalent teacher preparation agency in America and touched the lives of more teachers than any other educational institution” (Mattingly, 1975, p. 71).

Mayhew recommended in his first report to the Michigan Legislature that teacher institutes might be organized in each county and made accessible to every teacher. Teachers’ institutes, organized in each county, he argued, could be made accessible to every teacher. “Would it not be well,” claimed Mayhew, “to encourage their establishment in this state by legislation?” (Ninth Annual Report, 1845, p. 103). While Mayhew believed that normal schools would prove to be indispensable to the perfection of the public school system, he felt there were more pressing needs, with the most urgent being to popularize education throughout the state. Superintendent Mayhew believed that teacher associations, teachers’ institutes, and an

educational journal would more effectively accomplish these ends. In spite of his appeals to the state legislature for an appropriation of funds for institutes, internal conflicts over the control of such funds, policies over how institutional locations would be determined, and whether it was appropriate for the state to participate in what some perceived as a private responsibility, prevented any provisions being made for their support. While the debate raged over the state's role in teacher training, privately funded teachers' institutes flourished throughout the state and represented the most significant form of teacher training available.

While practicality would seem to suggest that "bringing instruction" to those who did not have the means to pursue education away from their communities reasonable, "non-traditional" methods of instruction would be viewed by many of the State's educational leaders as not quite legitimate. At best, these institutes were seen as a stop-gap measure. Many of the supporters for the establishment of a normal school and, later, the leadership and faculty of the Normal did not view the "quasi-academic" teacher institutes as the type of instruction necessary to elevate teaching to the status they wished to achieve. From their perspective, legitimacy could only be gained through an institutional structure that reflected their own experiences in advanced forms of education. As well, they wished to see an improvement in the academic preparation of prospective teachers. Throughout the Normal's history, the students who came to the Normal and the curriculum developed would be in tension with what these leaders saw as a legitimate form of teacher preparation. More advanced coursework and a desire to attract a higher quality student would relegate "non-traditional" methods of instruction for "non-traditional" students to the margins.

An Institute for the Training of Teachers

In his first report to the state legislature, Superintendent Pierce had argued that so long as teachers were not trained they would lack the professional status to command wages to sufficiently attract qualified and quality individuals to teaching. Pierce believed that school boards would continue to "purchase the cheap commodity...an almost universal employment of incompetent teachers" (Pierce, 1836, p16). An institution for the training of teachers was, he thought, the only mechanism to train a large pool of teachers and to mitigate the parsimonious and destructive tendency of local school boards (Mucher, 2003). How "if education is a science," he argued, "...is it to be understood without study?" (in Putnam, 1904, p. 49).

Succeeding superintendents, continued to call the legislature's attention to the need for a school for the preparation of teachers. Sawyer complained that the normal school principles were not yet incorporated into the branch system and that one or more of the branches should make teachers a part of their instruction (Sawyer, 1841). The general sentiment in the legislature was that any extra money that the legislature might have should be put into the branches of the University of Michigan rather than a new institution (Barry, 1843).

In 1846 and again in 1848, two bills sought to "establish a branch at the university as a state normal school" (Whitney, 1931, p. 14-15). The advocates of this plan could not muster enough strength to force either bill through the legislature (Sebaly, 1950) as the regents of the University deemed pedagogy an "inappropriate subject" for a university (Hinsdale, 1906, p. 11). In addition, those within the common school movement believed that the institution for the training of common school teachers should be a separate school as they feared grafting teacher preparation onto another institution of higher learning would distract it from its mission.

A final attempt was made to revitalize the failed branches of the University. A report issued by the Board of Visitors on the condition of the state's university in 1847, asserted that for

the University to flourish there was a need for intermediate institutions “to fill the space between the common schools and the University” (Report of the Board of Visitors, p. 19). In such schools the report continued, “Our youth in large numbers, whose circumstances would not permit them to engage the higher instruction of the University, might obtain, if not a finished, certainly a highly valuable and practical education in almost all departments of instruction” (Pierce, 1847, p. 15). In addition, the farmers, laborers, and craftsman of Michigan were also interested in access to education beyond the common schools. They believed it appropriate for the state to provide an intermediate level of schooling for their children.

Train Up the Young Spirits of Our Country

Two petitions were placed before the House in 1848 asking for the establishment of a state normal school for the preparation of teachers for the inferior schools of the state (Sebaly, 1950). The petitions were tabled without action (Jackson, 1926). The chief opposition to a normal school came from then Superintendent Ira Mayhew who believed that a normal school was not an urgent need relative to other requirements facing public education. Fearing that public school funding would be diverted to fund a normal school, Mayhew was of the opinion that the nascent Union schools would soon be able to contribute to the preparation of teachers for inferior schools (Jackson, 1926). A Union school, he argued, was a good substitute for a normal school or teacher seminary (Sebaly, 1950).

Mayhew was not the only one opposed to the Normal School. Many of the denominational groups that had established private colleges or academies, or sought to establish such, argued that a single normal could educate but a small portion of the teachers necessary to supply the public schools with teachers. It was argued that if a small appropriation of the Normal School funds were made available to the denominational colleges and academies throughout the state, they would be able to develop their own normal departments and more adequately provide the trained teachers needed in the state (Dunbar, 1935).

In spite of the opposition, Governor Ransom issued a call for the expedient establishment of a normal school in his 1848 address to the State Legislature. With the concerns of outlying legislators placated by assurances that practical agricultural subjects would be taught at the normal, former Superintendent Oliver Comstock, a proponent of a normal school and chairman of the Committee on Education in the House of Representatives, was able to push a bill through the legislature to establish a Normal School. The Act to found a Normal School was signed into law by the governor on March 29, 1849 (Sebaly, 1950).

On October 5, 1852, the Michigan State Normal School was dedicated. As the dignitaries that attended the dedication on that crisp autumn morning lauded the virtues of an institution dedicated to the preparation of teachers, the seeds of the Normal’s identity crisis had been sown. While professional educators had appealed for the establishment of an institution to train teachers, much of the public’s support had little to do with teacher preparation. For the laborers and farmers of the state, the Normal represented an opportunity to secure a level of learning above the common schools. Within the purposes established for the Normal School by the State Legislature can be found the contradictions that would define the State’s Normal School for the next century: “the exclusive purpose of which shall be the instruction of persons...in the art of teaching, and all various branches that pertain to a good common school education; also, to give instruction in the mechanic arts, and in the arts of husbandry and agricultural chemistry, in the fundamental laws of the United States” (Public Act No. 138, Section 1).

Even as these words were being written, conditions were arising that would lead educators throughout the State to question exactly what the new Normal School's role was to be in the State's educational system. With no institutions between the common schools and the State University, the branches having been discontinued and the high schools and union schools only in their infancy, the normal school was in reality a substitute for the branches. It was the only school of the same grade as the now defunct branches and, as such, was to be a teachers' school, a farmers' school, and an academy all in one (Gowery, 1880; Snarr, 1941; Sebal, 1950). As the Reverend Pierce exulted the need to "preserve, that teachers may be qualified to train up the young spirits of our country," at the dedication, the effective purpose of this new institution would be shaped by the conflict that these contradictions gave genesis to when the Normal was founded (Pierce, 1853).

The Purpose of the Normal?

From the moment the doors of the Normal opened questions about the role of the normal school were raised, which would reverberate throughout the institution for decades. What the Normal was or could become was wrapped up in the symbolic nature of its creation. As Edelman (1985) described, institutional arrangements are often structured so that outcomes are perceived in relation to shared abstract objectives and symbolic potential and not to their actual functional reality. It is difficult to believe that any of the Normal's supporters actually believed it could produce the number of teachers required by the state's common schools. While the enrollment of the Normal would exceed two hundred in only its second year, the number of graduates during the first 25 years of its existence averaged less than 30 students per year (Putnam, 1904). Putnam (1904), an early member of the faculty and author of the Normal's first history, remarked, "It was evident from the first that a single normal school, however largely attended or efficiently conducted, could do but little toward supplying the demand for qualified teachers in the common schools" (p. 39). In reality, Mayhew's plan to have teachers' institutes run throughout the state rather than a single normal school was perhaps a more realistic plan if the desire was to improve the quality of teaching for a significant number of teachers. Between 1855 and 1873, the normal enrolled 6,282 students (Putnam, 1904). During that same period, more than three times the number of teachers, 20,500, attended teachers' institutes in the state (Thirty-seventh Annual Report, 1873, p. 393). Yet, as has been described, these institutes were seen as "non-traditional" methods of instruction and did not garner the legitimacy the early leadership of the Normal deemed appropriate for the advancement of teaching, which necessitated attracting a better academically prepared student.

However, like the rhetorical question "do we not want quality teachers for our children?" the purpose of the Normal was understood to be self-evident. For the skeptical common folk, the Normal served to reassure them that the state was concerned about their interests and their schools. For those who controlled the state's educational system, the Normal legitimized the purposes they ascribed to inferior schools by representing the location through which approved teacher preparation would be disseminated. Though few teachers were prepared at the Normal and no one could identify exactly what an appropriate form of preparation ought to be, the normal served to ease the tensions and uncertainties caused by the conflicts over the ends to be served by the common schools. The Normal provided a symbolic measure of confidence and security that common school teachers were being prepared appropriately (Edelman, 1985).

Throughout the state there continued to be a difference of opinion as to the type of teacher preparation institution that should be created. Mayhew still clung to the notion that

teachers' institutes offered the greatest promise of improvement in the quality of teachers and sought to have funds diverted to this end. In fact, the opening session of the Normal was delayed until March 29, 1853, because the legislature failed to allocate funds for the Normal's operation due to Mayhew's obstruction. Others, such as Isaac Crary, believed that the branches should be revitalized. "Something should be done," he wrote, "so that the University may represent itself in the different sections of the state" (Joint Documents of the State of Michigan, 1850, p. 82). He was concerned about the growing pressure to remove the University of Michigan's monopoly on higher education and believed that branches should be fostered "or their places will soon be supplied by sectarian colleges" (Joint Documents of the State of Michigan, 1850, p. 83). For most, though, the Normal school was to be the institution that prepared teachers for the inferior schools of the state and provide access to an intermediate level of education (Pierce, 1837).

Growth and Changed in Public Schooling

However, conditions were changing as the Normal began to offer its program of study. In 1842, the legislature had authorized the city of Detroit to combine two or more districts for the purpose of forming schools with academic departments (Springman, 1953). In the following year, this act was extended to all districts in the state. This law modified the school district plan and made the city or town the unit for local school administration. Before this several school districts would be carved out of a township and provide schooling for children in the immediate area of each individual school. Children of all ages would attend the same school and would receive instruction together. This is our traditional vision of the one-room schoolhouse. By permitting several districts to consolidate, it was made possible for enough children of the same age to be grouped by "grade" and instructed by a single teacher. Thus, several grades or departments could be organized in one school, and according to the proponents of the plan, provided an education that was superior to the ungraded district or inferior schools (Putnam, 1904). Superintendent Mayhew urged the advancement of union schools throughout the state. He believed that they had many advantages, they were more efficient and cheaper than common schools and, most importantly, he hoped that in due time these schools would provide a level of academic preparation necessary to prepare teachers for the common schools (Snarr, 1941).

Others, however, saw the emergence of the union and graded schools as an opportunity to prepare students for entrance to the University. Henry Tappan, then President of the University of Michigan, believed that the union schools should be classified in the same intermediate grade as the former branches and serve as preparatory schools for "the preparation of pupils for any college to which their inclination may lead them; but ordered in particular reference to the collegiate department of the State University" (Seventeenth Annual Report, 1853, p. 178). While not all would advance to study in a preparatory school, its tax supported status was justified, from Tappan's perspective, by the public good that would be served by creating an eminent university. "Such a state," he argued, "will possess the most intelligent and powerful population and will increase beyond all others in wealth and general prosperity" (Nineteenth Annual Report, 1855, p. 179-180.)

The development of union and graded schools created a controversy over what a common or "inferior" school was and, consequently, where Normal school graduates were qualified to teach. For some, "all those [schools] which were supported by the public monies of the state" were common schools (Bingham, 1854, p. 153). For others, however, only primary schools that were not "graded" and received aid from the state qualified as common schools (Sebaly, 1950). This was significant in that the Normal was seen by many as only on par with graded schools and

consequently, with the application of the “Tappan Principle,” could prepare teachers for only those schools of a standing lower than a graded school.

This situation was made more complicated by the fact that few students completed a full course of study and graduated from the Normal. With the public schools only in session for three to five months out of the year, teaching was not a vocation in which many wished to invest a great deal of time or money. Students remained in the Normal only long enough to complete a portion of the work. According to the Normal’s first principal, Adonijah Welch, the majority of the students were compelled for financial reason to interrupt their school life with periods of teaching or other labor in order to replenish their funds for future study (Sebaly, 1950). It was not clear what type or amount of preparation qualified one to teach in the various levels of schooling. However, the Normal’s leadership believed that to attract the most students, the course of studies could not be restricted to the preparation of teachers for only the inferior or common schools.

The Normal as an Academy

During the early years of the Normal, many complained of the emphasis on academic preparation and argued “that our present State Normal School be relieved...from some portion of the labor of merely academic instruction” (Eighteenth Annual Report, 1859, p. 12). It was believed, by those who thought the Normal should provide only professional preparation, that academic training had no more right to a place in a “true” normal school than had the farmers’ department. Nevertheless, because it was to be found nowhere else in the state, for the time being, academic instruction had to be furnished in the Normal. The union schools were in their infancy, and the private academies and seminaries were inconsistent in their academic quality. The only way to secure the academic training that the new students in the Normal lacked was by supplying the academy within the Normal school (Gowery, 1880). Superintendent Gregory justified the emphasis on academic work and asserted that students enrolling in the Normal were deficient in the courses they would be required to teach. He added that when the academic quality of the students improved, the Normal would arrange its course of study to emphasize nothing but professional preparation. (Twenty-third Annual Report, 1859, p. 9). Principal Welch attributed this fact to the limited number of students who attended the regular teachers’ course as they sought only academic course work, thereby making an academic department necessary (Twenty-third Annual Report, 1859, p. 133). What went unsaid was that from the beginning, the Normal school was a mix of students, many of whom did not intend to teach. The Normal was not purely a teacher-training institution. In addition, those who did intend to teach wanted to be qualified to teach in the union and graded schools that paid higher wages. This type of preparation required an academic course of study.

Training Graded and Union School Teachers

In dealing with the growing graded and union schools, the Normal’s leadership charted a course that would become a trend in its history; rather than focusing on those who would teach in the inferior schools, the leadership of the Normal believed it could reduce the amount of academic instruction offered by attracting a more academically qualified student. This could only be accomplished by providing training for more advanced and better paying positions in the field—union and graded schools. So instead of confining its activities to the training of teachers for inferior schools, as it was enacted to do, the Normal leadership considered its province also the preparation of teachers for the more advanced schooling (Sebaly, 1950). “Its course of

study,” described Welch, “had been selected with especial reference to the wants of the teachers in the district and union schools” (Twenty-third Annual Report, 1859, p. 166). The normal would continue to ratchet up its standards and requirements in the hopes that eventually union and graded schools, and in time high schools, would be in a position to provide the rudimentary academic training required of inferior school teachers and it could then focus on advanced academic training and professional preparation.

While the claim that the poor quality of “Normalites” and the lack of students in the regular teacher’s course (those not planning to teach) caused the Normal to emphasize academic preparation may have been partially accurate, it did not tell the whole story. It was generally believed, by educationalists of the time, that the appropriate preparation for advanced levels of school was subject matter preparation. The notion that one needed to be trained in any manner other than in the subjects one was to teach was reserved for those who taught in the lowest levels of schooling. The concept of pedagogy for the teachers of inferior schools reflected the purpose that these institutions served. Primary schools were to provide a minimum of academic preparation; its primary role was to have students master those Protestant truths considered eternal and immutable. Consequently, teachers for these primary schools needed to be prepared in lectures and courses that reflected the truths that they were to transfer to the pupils in their classrooms.

Unfortunately, because course work in “professional” training was placed at the end of the program of study, few students remained enrolled at the Normal long enough to ever spend any significant amount of time in courses that incorporated the “methods of teaching.” The pedagogy received by most of these students amounted to only the weekly lectures offered to the various classes by the Normal’s principal. In addition, if the Normal was to train teachers for more advanced levels of schooling, its curriculum would require more academic work, rather than less, a fact that appealed not only to those who sought to teach in union and graded schools, but also to those who viewed the Normal as an intermediate level of education and sought course work for vocations other than teaching. It is ironic that in order to attract a better academically prepared student so that the Normal could focus on pedagogical preparation, the curriculum needed to be made more academic. Pedagogy would remain out of reach for those who came for a few classes and left to teach in the inferior schools, while professional preparation would be only a small fraction of the training for those who required work that was more academic in order to be qualified to teach in advanced departments.

The Public High School Begins

By the mid-1850s, as union and graded schools were organized, some of these schools had developed academic or high school departments that offered anywhere from two to three years of work beyond the eighth grade. In 1855, Superintendent Shearman indicated in his report to the legislature that some of these high school departments had furnished candidates for admissions to the freshman class at the University (Smith, 1881). There was some debate, however, as to the legality of providing tax dollars to support high school departments in the graded schools. In 1859, the legislatures gave these high school departments legal status as it authorized the use of tax dollars to support these advanced divisions. However, the establishment of high schools did not meet with universal approval. Many claimed that few students attended school beyond the intermediate or grammar levels of the graded schools and that using tax dollars to support preparatory education was illegal, especially when courses were provided in the ancient and dead languages (Putnam, 1904). Some argued that the support of secondary

education should come from University funds. While this conflict would ultimately be resolved in favor of tax supported high schools in 1874, the conflict did not diminish the popularity of high schools, as in the intervening years high schools flourished throughout the state.

Teacher Certification

In addition to the growth and changes experienced by the public schools during the early years of the Normal, the method by which teachers were certified to teach also began to change. Under the first school law enacted in 1837, township school inspectors were required to examine all persons proposing to teach in the public schools “in regard to moral character, learning, and ability to teach school” (Putnam, 1904, p. 149). Though the state would stipulate in an amendment to the school law in 1839 that all candidates must possess “a thorough and accurate knowledge of the several branches of study usually taught in the primary schools,” township inspectors would remain free to determine the content of the examinations until 1867.

However, the act establishing the Michigan State Normal School would mark the beginning of a shift in the control of certification away from local communities to the State. It was stipulated in the act creating the Normal that any person completing twenty-two weeks of instruction, or one full term, would be eligible to be examined by the Normal’s Principal in the studies required by the State Board of Education. If these individuals were deemed by the Principal to possess the learning and other qualification necessary to teach, they would receive a certificate to teach in the State’s common schools. In 1857, upon the recommendation of Superintendent Mayhew, the State Legislature passed an act authorizing the Normal to grant diplomas to its graduates which, when signed by the Board of Education, would serve as a legal license to teach in any of the primary schools in the state.

Raising the Standards

The immediate effect of these changes on the Normal was two-dimensional. On the one hand, the increasing standards diminished the supply of teachers who could be hired and forced many who had been teaching to abandon the field because they lacked the required training. Many complained that the increased standards drove up school taxes by placing standards of teachers’ qualifications unnecessarily high. Many County Superintendents, while not lacking in an understanding of the certification laws, often had to hire anyone they could to fill the teaching positions vacant in their schools (Sebaly, 1950). This caused state officials to demand that the Normal focus on preparing more teachers in a shorter period. On the other hand, by linking the examination of teachers to the branches of learning that they would be required to teach, the Normal was compelled again to elevate its academic offerings in order to meet its students’ demands for preparation that would prepare them to teach in the growing union and graded schools and the new high schools.

With the growth in the number of union, graded, and high schools, the leadership of the Normal reacted by again raising the standards for admissions. In 1856, the Normal elevated its standards to stay ahead of the advancements being made in the public schools. Consequently, an entire class in the Normal was pushed out of the Normal proper and into the model or practice school. The model school had been established within the first year of the Normal’s existence to provide “Normalites” with opportunities for practice teaching and observation. Yet, because few students completed the full course of study, little practice teaching was done. Critics of the Normal claimed that instead of providing practice teaching opportunities, the model department served as a primary school to prepare students for admissions to the Normal. In addition to

increasing the admissions standards, an optional language course was offered to those who desired to prepare themselves for the classical or academic departments of the union schools and high schools. (Twentieth Annual Report, 1856).

In 1860, the curriculum was altered again. What was most significant about this change was that in only seven years the Normal had not only advanced its admission requirements, but the requirements to graduate had gone from two years of course work to four years of course work. Because the majority of the “professional” courses were offered in the final years of study and few students stayed for the full course, little professional training was offered to the bulk of the students who left the Normal early to teach. These standards were advanced again the following year when the Board of Education further required that every student should master the rudiments of two foreign languages before graduating, Latin and Greek for the men, and Latin and French or German for the ladies (Twenty-fifth Annual Report, 1861).

As the standards of scholarship in the common and high schools were raised, so too were the standards and courses of study at the Normal. By 1863, modifications were again made in the course of instruction. The model school was changed to a regular graded school, and the Normal developed two courses of training. The first, or normal training course, was designed to prepare students for teaching in the primary or inferior schools and the lower grades of the graded schools and did not include instruction in languages. A second, or higher normal course, was established to prepare students for the upper grades and for high school departments and included a study of languages. Each program of study was to be two years in length, with students able to advance to the higher normal course by examination. While the amount of professional instruction given was increased, it remained a relatively small part of the students’ course work. In addition, students graduating from the higher normal course would now receive a diploma that would qualify them to teach in graded and high schools without examination (Twenty-seventh Annual Report, 1863). Unfortunately, few students advanced that far in their studies, and even rarer was a Normal School graduate.

A Call for More Normal Schools

The continued plans by the Board of Education to raise the academic standards met with considerable criticism. The critics of the Normal continued to protest that the Normal was not capable of producing the number of teachers required by the public schools, especially the need for teachers in rural or district schools, and that it was too academic and did not provide adequate professional training. Others complained that the Normal was separate from the University of Michigan and was not filling the gap between the primary schools and the State University. The conflict over the purpose to be served by the Normal caused many of the state’s educational leaders to look for alternative means for preparing primary school teachers.

As the Normal approached the end of its first decade, Superintendent Gregory was suggesting that normal classes be established in some of the schools and incorporated colleges and academies of the state. By 1860, at least twenty of the state’s colleges and union schools had organized “normal” departments (Twenty-fourth Annual Report, 1860). These schools were eager to increase their enrollments and, more importantly, legitimize their claims to state funding. In 1863, Gregory urged that there be at least one normal department established in each county and that the University of Michigan institute a department of the Science of Education because so many of its students became teachers (Twenty-seventh Annual Report, 1863). However, little came of Gregory’s recommendations as a Senate bill for the establishment of normal departments in the colleges of the state failed and a House bill to develop teachers’

classes in union and high schools also failed (Jackson, 1926). Gregory's successor, O. S. Hosford, also recommended that normal departments be established in every union school. "This," he said, "would be equivalent to creating a hundred normals schools all at once" (Thirty-first Annual Report, 1867, p. 151). Unfortunately, he made no mention of providing state aid for these schools, or for recognition of their certificates, which did not please the leaders of these schools

It might seem surprising, but the leadership of the Normal was quick to endorse the plans to distribute the preparation of primary school teachers to other institutions. Rather than seeing these new "normal" departments as competition, the Normal's leadership saw them as a mechanism for liberating the Normal from the pressures of the critics who claimed it was too academic and was not producing the required number of primary school teachers. In 1865, the Normal's Principal Daniel Mayhew suggested that the principals of the union schools organize classes for teachers and offer a course in instruction for those who wished to teach in the district schools (Twenty-ninth Annual Report, 1865).

While Superintendent Gregory called for the establishment of normal departments throughout the schools already in existence in the state, he hesitated in fully endorsing the establishment of a second normal. But the calls for the expansion of normal departments and the establishment of a new normal school came in the midst of the Civil War and the financial hard times that followed. With state funds tight, the legislature and the State Board of Education determined that it would be imprudent to divert desperately needed funding away from the State's first normal school.

Events would continue to unfold that would expand the demand for teachers and continue to influence the Normal to provide training for levels of schooling above the common schools. In 1869, the state legislature abolished the rate-bill system. With the abolishment of the rate-bill all children would be permitted to attend the "full" school session regardless of their parent's ability to pay. Additional legislative action would make the abolishment of the rate-bill even more significant. In 1871, an act was passed that compelled the parents of children between the ages of 8 and 14 to send each child to school (Public Act No. 165, 1871). In that same year, the legislature increased the length of time districts would be required to have schools in session (Public Act No. 17, 1871). This legislation served to increase the number of students attending school as well as the number of teachers required for the State's school districts and increased the demand for additional normal schools.

Criticism of the Normal Grows

One of the more vociferous critics of the normal was the University of Michigan's future Chair of Pedagogy William H. Payne, who charged that the State Normal School was almost purely an academic school. He claimed that nearly 90 percent of the students at the Normal received only an academic preparation. Fewer than six percent of the Normal's enrollment, he maintained, took any form of professional preparation (Mucher, 2003). "To say that the State Normal School has not fulfilled the purpose of its organization," he wrote, "is to draw a very mild conclusion from very stubborn facts" (Payne, 1868a, p. 13). For many of the Normal's critics, this was clear evidence that the Normal was, at state expense, nothing more than a glorified academy. Superintendent James Briggs (1872) directed that the Normal's "aim should be not only to be as sparingly academic as possible in the character of its instruction, but make its curriculum almost wholly confined to methods of instruction in the ordinary branches of a common school education" (Thirty-sixth Annual Report, 1872, p. 13). The State Board of

Education attempted to reassure a restive public that all measures were being taken to provide a complete course of professional training. However, many critics remained unsatisfied and complained that the State was expending far too much for the few teachers prepared by the Normal (Mucher, 2003).

Nevertheless, the Normal's Principal Joseph Estabrook, believed that, due to the increasing types of instruction being demanded by the public schools, an expanded curriculum was required so as "to provide different courses of studies and instruction for different classes of teachers" (Thirty-fifth Annual Report, 1871, p. 32). In addition to the expanded curriculum, many of the newly hired members of the faculty began to upgrade academic coursework so that it more closely resembled the courses offered in colleges and at the University (Mucher, 2003). Many of these courses began to exhibit an innovation new to the Normal curriculum in that they started to offer specialization in a variety of subject-matter fields (Snarr, 1941). The Normal also began to admit some high school graduates without examination. Moreover, students still came to the Normal not intending to teach in spite of the requirement that all students sign a pledge to teach. All of these changes caused the Board of Visitors, in 1874, to issue a warning "against allowing an ambition for rapid progress in academic studies to render subordinate in any degree, the central idea of the institution as a training school for teachers" (Thirty-eighth Annual Report, 1874, p. 134). Yet, while voices were again being raised warning that the Normal school should not become too academic, changes in the University of Michigan's admission policy would motivate districts across the state to offer advanced forms of schooling and, concomitantly, influence the Normal to modify its curriculum more rapidly to prepare high school teachers.

The Michigan Plan

By the late 1860s, the new high schools that were beginning to take their place in the state's educational system begged the question of what constituted a true high school and, consequently, a high school graduate. Many rural graded and union schools had taken the title of "high school" despite the fact that they often varied widely in the content of the curriculum they offered and the length of instruction required to graduate. The Regents and faculty, believing that local interests often did not possess the necessary "intellectual culture" to direct the program of study in their local high schools, asserted that a central authority would have to provide this direction. Michigan President Henry Frieze argued that if a genuine University were to be established, a much higher level of scholarship would have to be offered in the preparatory schools and academies throughout the state (Frieze, 1871). To achieve this, the curriculum of the secondary schools would need to be controlled by the University.

To this end, President Frieze introduced in 1871 what became known as the "Diploma" or "Michigan" Plan. Frieze proposed that a commission of examiners from the University faculty would annually visit any high school so requesting and report on the course of study, method of instruction, condition of the school, and the scholarship of the preparatory classes (Frieze, 1871, p. 179). If the faculty were satisfied that the preparatory work in any school was being conducted in a manner appropriate to the requirements of the University, the diploma from such a school would entitle its graduates admission to the University without examination.

By linking the function of the high school and the content of the curriculum to the University, the concept of teacher training was concomitantly linked to those methodologies deemed appropriate for faculty members of "higher" education, not the pedagogical premises upon which the Normal School was founded. Teaching in advanced levels of schooling consisted of imparting subject matter knowledge, and subject matter mastery was therefore regarded as the

chief qualification of the teacher (Partridge, 1957). If the Normal were to continue to prepare teachers for secondary schools it would have to raise its “academic curriculum” to meet the rising standards of secondary education as defined by the University of Michigan (Sebaly, 1950).

The Diploma Plan

In response to the growing demand for secondary teachers, the University of Michigan also introduced the Teachers Diploma in 1874. This granted to any senior who, by special examination, demonstrated their qualification to give instruction, a diploma signed by the University President, recommending them as a teacher. Unlike the Normal’s diploma, however, this did not permit the holder to bypass the local examinations often required by school boards, a practice that remained in effect until 1891. In spite of these efforts, the rapid growth of graded schools and high schools required more teachers than the University could provide.

This increased demand created an opportunity for the graduates of the Normal School who sought the more prestigious and financially secure secondary positions. Consequently, the leadership of the Normal School was compelled to provide more adequate training for those of its graduates who would teach in the secondary schools, placing the Normal effectively in competition with the University. If, as it was commonly held, secondary teachers should receive their training in a college or university, then that is what the Normal would become. However, events in the state would slow this advancement as one last attempt would be made to confine the work of the Normal to the training of teachers for the primary schools of the state and provide only professional work.

“Professional” Training

Although the Normal’s Principal, Joseph Estabrook, reiterated in his report of 1875 that the sole aim of the Normal was “to qualify teachers for their work in all departments of our district schools,” the pressure was mounting to either change the Normal’s curriculum or establish additional normals that would provide training for the teachers of the district schools and a more practical form of education (Thirty-ninth Annual Report, 1875, p. 202). It should be noted that in the same report, Estabrook reported that bookkeeping had been taught to 125 students during the winter term (Thirty-ninth Annual Report, 1875)

In spite of the fact that the inadequate means for training teachers was brought to the attention of the State Legislature time and again, little was done to resolve the situation. In 1875, a bill to institute teacher training classes in union and high schools was defeated, as was a request for \$30,000 to expand the State Normal School (Jackson, 1926). In addition, an attempt to establish a second normal school in the Upper Peninsula was defeated after members of the Normal’s and University’s faculties lobbied against the bill (Flokstra, 1932). They argued that one school well sustained could do more for the state’s educational system than several institutions inadequately sustained. The policy of unity, they asserted, was more economical (Flokstra, 1932). Taxpayers likewise were not inclined to provide additional resources to sustain another normal and feared that state school funds would be diverted to these new schools, necessitating an increase in their local school taxes.

The criticism of the Normal continued to escalate. The Board of Visitors in its 1876 report criticized the use of the Normal as a preparatory institution. “We regret that our duty requires us to condemn,” the Board reported, “what seems to us an unjustifiable use of the [Normal] department of the Normal School” (Fortieth Annual Report, 1876, p. 134). The Board was concerned because the University of Michigan was now recognizing the State Normal as a

preparatory school whose graduates did not have to submit to the usual examination and could transfer directly into the University. The Visitors charged that this fact appeared to be diverting the Normal from its proper course and that it should “devote itself exclusively to the education and training of teachers for the public schools” (Fortieth Annual Report, 1876, p. 134).

Yet the leadership and faculty of the Normal continued to assert that if it could attract a higher grade of student it could eventually limit its academic course work and concentrate on professional training. Principal Estabrook reported in 1876 that the increased scholarship requirements for admissions had considerably advanced the maturity of those who entered the Normal (Thirty-ninth Annual Report, 1875). In addition, the faculty asserted that the academic course work was not taught as it would be in a typical academy, high school, or college. Rather, they averred, each academic course was presented in a manner to develop teachers and sought to impress upon each student the methods and pedagogical axioms necessary to teach the subject. Given that few could agree as to what these pedagogical axioms might be beyond the abilities to govern a classroom, many viewed these assertions skeptically. The evidence suggests that the Normal was more advanced academically than its leadership or faculty were willing to admit. For those completing the four-year programs of study in the Classical or English course, only three courses out of the 31 required in these programs could be described as professional instruction (Putnam, 1899).

When the Board of Visitors returned to the Normal campus in 1877, the faculty was quite disturbed by the attitude of the legislature. Those in the faculty who wished to see the Normal made more professional were frustrated by the legislature’s lack of patience. From their perspective, the legislators did not understand that the “art of teaching” could not be sufficiently addressed until the quality of the student’s academic preparation was improved. On the other hand, subject-minded faculty members were discomfited by the demands for more professional training, given that college graduates without any “professional” training occupied most of the better positions in the schools (Robarts, 1968). The Normal and its graduates, they argued, were already held in low esteem. They insisted that reducing the amount of academic course work would relegate “Normalites” to the lowest levels of the public schools and deny students the cultural sophistication and content knowledge to which they aspired.

Unfortunately, economy-minded legislators and taxpayers considered a normal school that provided only academic course work an unnecessary expense. They charged that this duplicated the work of high schools and academies. Claims by the leadership of the Normal and its faculty that they alone could teach teachers how to teach successfully was viewed skeptically by many. Most telling to these critics of the Normal was that the school continued to devote most of its time to teaching what to teach rather than how to teach it (Robarts, 1968).

Others did not question the efficacy of professional instruction for primary school teachers. Rather, they argued that the preparation for elementary teachers was far different than that required of secondary teachers. The Normal’s academic orientation and its failure was caused by its inappropriate focus on the preparation of secondary teachers. The great need of the state, they argued, was not for instruction in the high school branches but for well-trained teachers in the common schools. The colleges and the state University would supply teachers for high schools.

Pedagogy and Status

What went unsaid in this criticism, however, was far more significant than the simple assertion that common school teachers taught students younger than high school teachers.

Education for the general population, which was to be provided in the common schools, was actually an alternative to the “true” education provided in colleges and universities and the new preparatory institution—high schools (Perkinson, 1995). Common schools did not address the same purpose as advanced forms of education. How common school teachers and high school teachers were to be trained was implicitly linked to the conceptualization of the content and structure of knowledge to be taught to pupils of different social status. The social value attributed to discrete forms of knowledge differentiated the ends to be served by the different levels of schooling.

From this perspective, the social location of individuals and groups was to determine their access to a stratified body of knowledge. Education was to serve as a gateway to power: the powers of communication, career, income, reputation, and social status. Education would thus divide society between those “properly” educated and those provided only a rudimentary education proscribed by the “properly” educated. Social stability and progress could be secured, these critics argued, only if this balance were maintained. This could be accomplished only if teachers were prepared to fit the students they would be educating. Accordingly, teachers in high schools could only be prepared in colleges or universities because of their special preparatory function. Only higher education offered a course of study sufficiently extensive enough to provide the requisite culture and scholarship to prepare principals and high school teachers. Within the liberal tradition, one learns to think by thinking “liberally;” “the process of learning and thinking are at their best identical” (Borrowman, 1965, p. 3). In their view, engagement in the process of “thinking” through a liberal course of study simultaneously trained one to teach (Borrowman, 1965).

This, however, was not expected of normal school students. It was not believed necessary for these teachers to possess the cultivation, and learnedness required of high school and college instructors. Common school teachers, who were to be trained in the Normal, were expected to transmit a body of knowledge that did not require scholarship or independent thought. They were required, as were their students, to be obedient and loyal, and to teach “a curriculum prescribed by the board of education, through texts selected by these boards...according to methods suggested by master teachers or educational theorists most of whom had been educated in colleges” (Borrowman, 1965, p. 22). The Normal School was to offer a course of study scarcely above the average graded or union school. Training of elementary teachers should be confined to approved methods of schoolroom management, appropriate dispositional development through observation and practice teaching, and the advancement of an *esprit de corps* necessary to sustain elementary teachers in their calling.

The critics of the Normal viewed a preparation program limited in its academic scope and focused on technical training the most efficient and cost effective method for preparing the quantity of teachers needed to educate the masses in the common schools. It made little sense to “overeducate” common school teachers, as this would increase the cost of providing schooling to the common class. So long as the “Normalites” were prepared in a manner that did not permit them to compete for higher-paying graded or high school positions, the cost of operating the common schools could be contained. The Chair of Pedagogy at the University of Michigan, William Payne, echoed these sentiments when he explained that technical training offered immature students at the Normal School, “who could be expected to become competent craftsmen, at best, was fundamentally different from the liberal-professional education offered potential educational leaders” (in Borrowman, 1965, p. 13).

The Great Experiment

The report issued by the Board of Visitors in 1877 was the most scathing to date, charging that the Normal made no pretense to normal instruction. They challenged those in the faculty who asserted that the academic courses were taught with the aim of how to teach the subject matter. “If the Normal School devotes itself largely to academic instruction,” they declared, “the real methods inculcated—no matter what the lecture and reading may be—will be academic” (Forty-first Annual Report, 1877, p. 43). While they conceded that there might have been a time when, because of the lack of advanced schooling in the state, students were deficient in their academic preparation, this was not the case now. The Board pointed out that today “Michigan boasts 300 graded schools—most of them with high school departments...six academies and seminaries, eight colleges, and one university” (Forty-first Annual Report, 1877, p. 45). With more than 9,000 teachers in the state and between 3,000 and 4,000 new teachers needed every year to replace those who left the field, the Board demanded that the Normal restrict its efforts to the education of elementary school teachers (Forty-first Annual Report, 1877). Presently, they complained, “pupils are expected to take a full line of studies...over a regular academic or high school course...receive some lectures on pedagogy...and do a limited amount of practice teaching in the model” (Forty-first Annual Report, 1877, p. 44). In their judgment, the focus of the Normal School should be to “graft onto the native ability and acquired culture the best methods of teaching and governing” (Forty-first Annual Report, 1877, p. 44). They warned the Normal principal and faculty not to “weary the patience of its friends and opportunities endeavoring to expand itself into a university. A Normal School should chiefly look to others for academic work” (Forty-first Annual Report, 1877, p. 45).

Believing that the time had come to make changes, the State Board of Education in its meeting of March 1878 appointed a committee to investigate the propriety and necessity of a change in the Normal’s course of study (Gowery, 1880). In the spring of 1878, the committee presented its proposal to the Board of Education. The committee recommended that the school of observation and practice be enlarged to provide a graded school representing all the departments of the best-graded schools in the state. By enlarging the school of observation, students applying to the Normal who were deficient in their academic preparation could make such preparation in the practice school. In addition, the length of courses should be one school year. From their perspective, it made little economic sense for the state to spend four years educating teachers who remained in the field on average scarcely three years. The curriculum should be changed to three one-year courses: the common course, higher English course, and language course. Each of these was to fit a teacher for the lower and higher grades of the common and graded schools. Aside from a general review of the branches to be taught, the committee emphasized that these courses were to be confined to professional instruction (Forty-second Annual Report, 1878).

Their final recommendation was that the Normal School should do more than impart normal instruction—it should sift its pupils. A diploma from the Normal, the committee asserted, should guarantee to the citizens of the state that the teacher could properly teach and manage a school. This was to be accomplished in the “school of observation and practice” by requiring prospective teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of approved methods, aptness to teach, and the ability to manage a school (Forty-second Annual Report, 1878).

The Board of Education adopted all of the committee’s recommendations without dissent, stating that “it cannot be denied a wide spread feeling exists in the state that this institution has been too much an academy or high school...the time has now come when it should be a specialized school, doing in a credible way an essential work not elsewhere done in the state”

(Putnam, 1899, p. 65). Thus began what would come to be called the “great experiment,” an endeavor described by the Board as “one quite in advance of anything previously undertaken”—the exclusion of all academic work and the complete devotion to professional instruction. Now, the Board proclaimed, the Normal School will be able to “qualify teachers for their work in all departments of our district and graded schools, to increase their teaching power and to send them forth to their fields of labor, filled with the spirit of their profession” (Forty-second Annual Report, 1878, p. 37).

Beginning in the fall of 1878, the courses and requirements for admissions were modified in accordance with the plan adopted by the Board of Education. The result of these changes in the organization and arrangements of the Normal School placed a large number of students who had been in the lower courses of the Normal proper into the high school department to be taught not by the professors of the Normal but by upper class students. The reorganization, however, did not meet with general approval. The majority of the students reacted unfavorably to the changes, and a marked decline in enrollment was experienced the year following the implementation of the experiment. The overall enrollment in the Normal School “proper” dropped from 409 students in 1875 to 298 students in 1880 (Flokstra, 1932). While some did not think the change went far enough, the majority believed that the sharp separation between academic and professional training worked undue hardship on the Normal School since many of the students came with a meager preparation, while others desired advanced course work (Flokstra, 1932). At the end of the fall term in 1879, Principal Estabrook resigned. With the resignation of Estabrook and the decline in enrollment, the Board of Education was vexed as to the direction to be charted by the Normal School’s next principal. “The school was to a certain extent in a transition state,” reported the Board, and “the most important task of the new principal would be to restore the balance in the curriculum and once again move the Normal forward” (in Isbell, 1975, p. 121). In the spring of 1880, the State Board of Education chose the principal of the Normal at Potsdam, New York, Malcolm MacVicar, for this task. His first step was the abandonment of the experiment.

A Chair of Pedagogy

At the same time the Normal School began its curricular experiment, the University of Michigan’s role in the preparation of teachers would also experience a significant change. From its founding in 1837, the University was to play a role in the training of teachers. The branches of the University were to serve the dual role of preparing students for the University and training teachers for the common schools of the state. With the demise of the branches in 1845, there were frequent calls for the establishment of a normal department at the University of Michigan. However, the faculty of the University showed little interest in the training of elementary school teachers.

With the establishment of the Diploma Plan in 1871, the University’s faculty became more closely acquainted with the quality of teaching being done through their inspection of high schools throughout the state. Because of this exposure, they were favorably disposed to support efforts to expand the University’s role in the preparation of high school teachers, principals, and superintendents. Superintendent Daniel Briggs suggested in 1873, when the University introduced its teacher’s diploma, that a normal department at the University could add prestige to the profession of teaching (Forty-second Annual Report, 1878). University of Michigan President James Angell agreed with Briggs and urged the Board of Regents to provide for some kind of instruction in “Pedagogics” (Partridge, 1957). In 1879, the Regents appointed William H.

Payne the first Chair of “The Science and Art of Teaching (Jackson, 1926). It was clear from Angell’s report of 1879 that he had high school teachers in mind when he made his proposal. “We desire it to be most clearly understood that we have no intention of invading the territory of our neighbors of the Normal School,” he wrote. “The line between their work and ours is very distinct” (Angell, 1879, p. 10-11). Payne (1868b) perceived the function of the university or college to consist of providing a liberal, scholarly, and philosophical education, which leaders of education required.

For Payne, the teaching profession was more analogous to the military establishment than to medicine or the law. “All who bear arms,” he wrote, “are not professional soldiers, so all who teach are not professional teachers” (Payne, 1901, p. 96). The teachers’ institute and the normal school were equivalent to the soldier’s camp in military life, “while West Point and Annapolis are typical of higher institutions devoted to the education of professional teachers” (Payne, 1901, p. 96). One could not expect, he explained, for the great masses of teachers to engage in a thorough study of the science of education. According to Payne, teachers for the inferior schools—the rank and file classroom teacher—should be provided a good secondary education and instruction in approved methods of schoolroom management, while the university should prepare “the professional corps of education leaders or officers” (Payne, 1901, p. 99). Technical training and liberal studies were, in Payne’s view, incompatible (Snarr, 1941). He maintained that professional training should consist of the study of educational science, and the development of scholarly and philosophical insight; methods and techniques, while recognized, were not to be stressed (Partridge, 1957). It was clear that Payne meant to see the education of elementary school teachers segregated from the preparation of high school teachers and school administrators (Snarr, 1941). However, the University of Michigan would be unable to fulfill its appropriated function of preparing all teachers for the secondary schools; hence, the Normal School would come to supply secondary school teachers as well as elementary school teachers.

The Normal Becomes a College

When Principal Malcolm MacVicar arrived at the Normal in 1880, he found in operation the experimental curriculum that restricted the Normal’s courses to only professional work. MacVicar, who believed in a strong emphasis in academic preparation, immediately abandoned the experimental curriculum and insisted that all programs include a broad base in academic course work. He initiated a common core of academic courses that would constitute the foundation for all students, a concept that later would become known in higher education as “general education.” He also laid the foundation for students to concentrate in areas of “special prominence,” in what would eventually evolve into “majors” and “minors” (Isbell, 1971). In consultation with the faculty, he developed five distinct programs of study:

Normal School Course of Study, 1880

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Scientific Course | 4 year course |
| Language Course | 4 year course |
| Literary Course | 4 year course |
| Art Course | 4 year course |
| Common School Course | 2 year course |

Note: From *A history of the Michigan State Normal School.*, 1899, by D. Putnam, Ypsilanti, MI: The Scharf Tag & Box Co.

MacVicar did not abandon professional training; the proportion of professional course work remained roughly a third of a student's course load as it had earlier (Calendar of the Michigan State Normal School, 1881). Rather, he shifted its focus from technique and methods to a more theoretical approach. Courses on the philosophy of education and the principles of teaching replaced courses in object teaching and school governance (Calendar of the Michigan State Normal School, 1881). The course work began to closely resemble the professional course work found at the University of Michigan. In addition, MacVicar believed that no amount of book study could replace experience in the classroom. He asserted "that the power to do work well must be acquired, like all other arts, by doing the work rather than 'talking' about it" (Forty-fourth Annual Report, 1880, p. 67). As such, he insisted that students participate in practice teaching. While MacVicar would serve as principal for only one year, the changes he brought to the Normal's curriculum would continue to influence the Normal's course well into the next century. While the number of courses and subjects taught would gradually increase and be modified, the organizational structure he brought to the curriculum—a broad base in academic course work, professional studies grounded in the principles of teaching, and a period of concentrated practice teaching—would remain the template for teacher training into our own time.

In recognition of the advances being made in the public schools, in 1881, students were permitted to enter advanced course work without examination by presenting a certificate from the superintendent or principal of a high school, graded school, or other institution approved by the faculty of the Normal (Forty-fifth Annual Report, 1881). Over the next three years, the Normal began to be organized into departments. The departments of chemistry and physics, natural science, and English would be among the first to be organized as such (the Department of Classic Languages had been organized in 1872). In addition, the faculty was beginning to resemble the faculty of the University of Michigan as more subject area specialists with PhD's were being hired.

In 1883, the Board of Education appointed Edwin Willits principal of the Normal. What made his appointment significant was that he was neither a protestant minister nor a professional educator, a first for the Normal. The Board explained its decision to hire Willits, a lawyer by trade, by emphasizing that the legislative act to establish the Normal provided for the instruction of its pupils "in the fundamental laws of the United States, and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens" (Forty-eighth Annual Report, 1884, p. 69). By calling attention to the broader scope of the legislative intent for the Normal, the Board was charting an expanding mission for the Normal. In Willits first report to the Board, he affirmed this position when he wrote:

Theoretically, it has been claimed that each should be strictly confined to its sphere—that the academy, high school, or college should have the sole supervision of the subject matter and the Normal School of the methods. Like all theories, this one fails in its extreme. (Forty-seventh Annual Report, 1883, p. 46)

If anyone harbored sentiments in favor of the great experiment, the appointment of Willits signaled that this effort would not be revived. By 1884, the common school course was dropped and a three year English course substituted (Isbell, 1971). In that same year, penmanship was dropped from the curriculum, being replaced by algebra (Flokstra, 1932).

The Board of Visitors recommended in 1887 that, in order to keep pace with the advances being made in the public schools, the Normal should increase its requirements for admissions and add one year of advanced studies so that the Normal would remain ahead of the high schools and its graduates qualified to teach in a secondary school (Fifty-first Annual Report, 1887). Newly appointed Principal John Sill endorsed the Board's recommendations, believing that such an extension would lead to a literary or pedagogical degree (Fifty-second Annual Report, 1888). "Such a plan," wrote Sill, "would not only meet the wants of our own graduates, but it would give also a needed opportunity to graduates of colleges and the University to obtain in a brief post-graduate course...under expert supervision" (Fifty-second Annual Report, 1888, p. 44). Two year later, the Superintendent of Public Instruction suggested that the Normal School should trust the high schools and admit graduates without examination. The following year, all high school graduates were being admitted directly into the Normal.

Not everyone, however, was pleased with these changes. L. R. Fiske, President of the State Teachers Association, complained that the Normal had veered too far from its primary task; "it should either cease doing so much academic work and put its strength upon the work of training men and women to teach...or change its name...and cease laying claim to being a normal school" (Fifty-second Annual Report, 1888, p. 214). However, it would be the conflict between Professor Charles Fitz Roy Bellows and the Board of Education that would epitomize the battle that had been waged over the question of whether the Normal should become an exclusively professional institution. The outcome of this conflict would lay to rest, if not the name of the Normal, the pretense that the Normal was to be an institution that offered only professional course work.

Bellows, who had been among the strongest supporters of the 1878 experiment, continued to fight for a strong professional emphasis even after the abandonment of the experiment in 1880. He charged:

The people of Michigan in their collective capacity imagine that their Normal School is an institution for the specific purpose of teaching young men and women the art of teaching. If they knew that its pupils were merely or chiefly taught the things which can be just as well learned in any public high school in the State, they may not feel willing to spend \$10,000 a year upon something that has no real existence. (*The Michigan Moderator*, June 18, 1891, p. 622)

In the years that followed the failed experiment, Bellows became fanatical in his efforts to restrict instruction to only professional work. A professor of mathematics, he continued to teach his math classes as courses in methods in spite of opposition from the administration. In 1890, the problem had become so serious that the State Board of Education sent a committee to Ypsilanti to investigate the situation. In their report they rebuked Professor Bellows and emphasized that his academic courses should focus on the content of arithmetic and not methods (Isbell, 1971). The Board of Education requested that Bellows adopt a textbook and keep his academic instruction academic or resign. He did neither. The following year he was dismissed from the Normal (Isbell, 1971). The State Board of Education had made it clear that the academic work of the Normal would no longer be compromised.

In the same year as the Bellows affair, advanced courses leading to a Bachelor of Pedagogics and Masters of Pedagogics would be introduced (Fifty-fourth Annual Report, 1890). Over the next three years, the Normal would move to an academic department structure with

Principal Sill and the heads of the departments organized into a Normal Council with authority to make recommendations to the Board. A separate Department of Pedagogy was organized, testifying to the discrete place teacher training courses now played in the overall curriculum of the Normal, which was rapidly becoming dominated by subject area specialists.

A brochure published in 1893 for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago reflects the ambitious thinking of the faculty that a student “ought to pursue his own course of instruction considerably beyond the limit of the best high school course of study” (The State Normal School of Michigan, *Its Plans and Purpose*, 1893, p. 21). This brochure went on to describe the admission requirements of the University of Michigan as determining the upper limits of high school instruction, asserting that the Normal was actually providing college-grade work in mathematics, history, English, physical science, natural science, Latin, and Greek. “This school,” the brochure explained, “occupies the ground of higher education...and it has been moved thereto by the steadily increasing demands of the Public Schools” (The State Normal School of Michigan, *Its Plans and Purpose*, 1893, p. 22)

Professors of Pedagogy at the Normal now found themselves operating in a collegiate department structure that was guided by the canons of the academy rather than the public schools. Consequently, these professors of education, with an appreciation for the changes occurring and an aspiration for greater academic prestige, began to argue that science could inform the work of teachers just as William H. Payne, Michigan’s Chair of Pedagogy had asserted a decade earlier. By upgrading their disciplinary content and emulating the type of pedagogical instruction practiced at other colleges and universities, the faculty of education at the Normal came to believe that the education of teachers could be given legitimacy through the application of science. Through rigorous and scientific observations, they argued, reliable information could be provided teachers.

The “new psychology” being given form by educators such as G. Stanley Hall and his “child studies” research began to assert that scholarship in education constituted a distinct academic discipline. Through careful observation of a child’s mental growth, useful scientific principles could be deduced that would inform educational practice. “The psychologist of the new dispensation,” noted Normal professor Putnam (1899), “must see every statement proven by experiment and measurable before he will commit himself in regard to it” (p. 64). A search for a science of learning and pedagogical efficiency would come to guide the work of faculty in the Normal’s Department of Psychology and Pedagogy.

The Normal had advanced so far by 1894 that the State Senate began to question whether there was a difference between the work done at the University of Michigan, the State Normal School, and the State Agricultural College. A motion to establish a special committee to investigate the charges that work was being duplicated, however, was never carried out. With the legislature’s attention shifting to the establishment of another normal school at Mt. Pleasant or Marquette, the issue was never revisited. The leadership of the Normal school discontinued its opposition to additional normal schools, stipulating rather ironically that the work of these new institutions should be confined to the preparation of teachers for the common schools of rural Michigan.

Conclusion

By the conclusion of the 1890s, the Michigan State Normal School was no longer a struggling secondary school seeking to justify its existence. From its beginning the State’s Normal School was beset with conflicts over its purpose. Various stakeholders, inside and

outside the institution, saw in the Normal an opportunity to pursue their own interests. For the young men and women who had been closed off from advanced forms of education, the Normal provided them the academic preparation to pursue their vocational interests whether as teachers or in other occupations. Some in state government were sympathetic to the demands of families for the state to provide an intermediate form of schooling for their sons and daughters. Many of the state's educational leaders as well as some legislators saw the Normal as an economical and efficient way to provide the quantity of teachers needed for the growing state school system. Given the limited aims of the inferior schools, normal school students did not require a liberal course of scholarship necessary for more advanced forms of schooling. Other educational leaders viewed normal training as an opportunity to improve the status of teachers by attracting a higher caliber of student. Increased standards of scholarship, focused on subject matter preparation, would, in their opinion, raise the professional status of teachers. Finally, the men who organized the Normal were men of "higher" education who found legitimacy in the structures of the academic institutions with which they were familiar. As the Normal continued to advance academically, attracting subject area faculty, and adopting a collegiate structure, the academic professionals would be guided by professional canons of legitimacy. In time, they would seek to shed the status of pre-collegiate institution, which would be at odds with a single purpose Normal.

As a consequence, a normal, in its purest sense, was not to be sustained along the banks of the Huron River. In 1899, an act was passed that changed the name of the "Michigan State Normal School" to the "Michigan State Normal College" (Public Act No. 52, 1899, p. 86). While still an institution established to prepare teachers, an era had passed. In the next fifty years the Normal College would be transformed into a multi-purpose university, its time-honored name abandoned to be replaced by a faceless title referring to a geographical location, a denial of its status as the State's Normal School, and placing the preparation of teachers alongside the variety of non-teaching degrees offered at the University (Isbell, 1975). However, the historical currents and conflicts that shaped the Michigan State Normal School's transition to a four-year college would remain embedded in the institutional structures that would become Eastern Michigan University.

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