

Dr. Lester M. Emans:
The Educational Transformation of
Teachers in Eau Claire in the 1950s and 60s

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Abstract

The education of teachers is a study that does not receive enough attention in terms of historical and philosophical studies. Thus, in this paper the author will identify the shaping of pre-service education for teachers and note the large transformation of education in the 1950s and 1960s. The author will focus on Lester Emans, who was a crucial supporter and promoter of advancing education for teachers in training. Emans effort helped to transform the educational department at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Emans enhanced the standards within the curriculum taught at the University by implementing a lab school on campus, improving Wisconsin's values of teaching, restructuring the secondary education department and enhancing the student teaching program at Eau Claire. His determinations to develop the educational system for future teachers has proven, in more ways than one, beneficial to the education department at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and still resonates today.

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1. Introduction

Select a young and pleasing personality; trim off all mannerisms of voice, dress or deportment; pour over it a mixture of equal parts of the wisdom of Solomon, and the patience of Job, season with the salt of experience, the pepper of animation, the oil of sympathy and a dash of humor; stew for about four years in a hot classroom, testing occasionally with the fork of criticism thrust by a principal of a superintendent. When done to a turn, garnish with a small salary and serve hot to the community.

--Parker Teacher's Agency

It was this clipping, entitled "The Making of a Teacher," which was sent to Professor E.R. McPhee at the State Teachers College on May 5, 1947, that can best describe the techniques and characteristics of an ideal teacher just after World War II.¹ It was a time when the education of teachers would undergo a massive transformation. The education of teachers did not receive the attention it deserved and there was a need to alter its process. The advancement in education of teachers was seen as important in order to increase the progress of students. This progress was made to account for the Baby Boom and also to stay technologically sound due to the Cold War tension with the Soviet Union. These two reasons for advancement in education barely scratch the surface of the impact of teacher education in the 50s and 60s. However, the 50s and 60s were indispensable time frames for teacher training procedures. Before this period, education of teachers was less essential within our society. Before a more structured framing of teacher education was underway, training was much less formal before the 50s. Although the history of teacher education is relatively short in comparison to the broad spectrum of the past, several obstacles were overcome in order to achieve the teacher preparation that is available to

¹ George R Ray, E.R. McPhee, "The Making of a Teacher," Letter from the Parker Teacher's Agency, May 5, 1947, Lester Emans Papers, Box2/folder 1, Publications and Speeches, Eau Claire, WI, University Archives and Special Collections, McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire.

those wanting to enter the field of education. Ultimately programs really began to shift as early as the 1800s.

In short review, in the early 19th century teacher education took many forms. Teachers received no formal training in pedagogy or the art of teaching. All that was needed by the instructor was a background in the content taught. Oftentimes, fledging teachers learned to teach “by pursuing an apprenticeship with an experienced practitioner.”² Not only was there no formal education for future teachers, but the location where teachers worked varied widely. Teaching occurred in homes, churches, tutor schools, free schools for paupers, and private schools for the wealthy.³

In the 1830s and throughout 19th century, a more centralized system emerged. There was growth in the existence of common schools. These were a system of community elementary schools where teachers were public employees hired by local school boards.⁴ Initially, teachers were able to teach at these schools if they completed the grade levels themselves. Giving them the ability to teach with very little background knowledge on a specific subject, just enough to know more than the students. As common schools grew and expanded throughout the country, so did the requisite for teachers. The demand for teachers grew exponentially as greater and greater numbers of children attended the common schools. As the number of common schools grew, so did a growing reform

² M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, & D. John McIntyre, “Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts,” 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 290-292.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 292.

movement to expand and improve teacher education. Educational leaders from the late 1800s and early 1900s, like James Carter, Horace Mann, and Henry Barnard, advocated for teacher education. They believed teachers should not only be educated in the subject matter they were going to teach, but in pedagogy.⁵

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, Normal Schools arose. Normal Schools were schools for teacher training. They were seen on the local, county and state level. Future teachers were expected to attend one to two years of training, focusing heavily on subject matter. Subject matter would specifically encompass the content area a pre-service teacher wished to teach. Along with the actual training of teaching, which is commonly referred to as pedagogy today. Reformers, like Horace Mann, supported Normal Schools because they prepared teachers to help students become productive citizens. Local officials supported Normal Schools because they provided teachers for the growing numbers of schools. Most attendees at Normal Schools were female, and were largely trained to teach at the elementary school levels. Future high school teachers tended to go to Universities for training in their content area with a small amount of pedagogy, but few did this until 1890.⁶

As years carried on, Normal Schools continued to train teachers, but felt the need to raise revenues and increase enrollments. The schools design for teacher preparation began to expand offerings in other disciplines in an effort to attract not just future teachers, but

⁵ Ibid., 291-293.

⁶ Ibid., 296.

other students as well. People wanted to attend college, but did not want to travel far to receive an education, so they started to take classes at Normal Schools. Gradually Normal Schools transitioned to “Teachers Colleges” then “State Colleges,” and finally what we know today as state “Universities.” This transition began in the 1920s, and by the 1950s, Normal Schools ceased to exist. Normal Schools had transitioned to State Universities, where several majors were offered, including teaching degrees. At this point, to become a teacher, a bachelor degree was necessary to meet society’s growing standards.⁷

This transition from “Teacher Colleges” to “State Colleges” then to “Universities” occurred at what is now known as Eau Claire. The name of the school altered with the focus of study, but also with the development of new programs and curricula. One man that deserves particular recognition for the shaping and progress of the Education Department at Eau Claire was Dr. Lester M. Emans.

Emans, who was born in Peoria County, Illinois, graduated from Lawrence College in 1925 and earned his master’s and doctoral degrees in administration and supervision from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For several years he served as an administrator in schools all across Wisconsin, but most notably made a name for himself at the college in Eau Claire from 1946 to 1974.⁸ Here, he assumed the role of Dean of Administration, Dean of Education, and Director of Teacher Education, Chairmen of the Department of Education and several others which will be highlighted throughout this paper. However, it is not the

⁷ Ibid., 301.

⁸ Biographical Data, Lester Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI, University Archives and Special Collection McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire.

titles that he assumed, but the work he did for the Eau Claire and the Wisconsin system of teaching, most specifically in the 1950s and 1960s, that impacted Wisconsin and the future of education in the state and at the University. More specifically, Emans made a name for himself by promoting the significance of Lab Schools, implementing a stronger teacher education program, promoting the significance of lab schools and creating a stronger junior high curriculum. The ideas, influence and inspiration of Dr. Lester M. Emans positively and profoundly impacted teacher training, thus furthering the development of K-12 education.

2. Laboratory School

Throughout Emans' career, he was published several times in various teacher education magazines and journals. One of his more substantial publications, or philosophical theoretic works was entitled, *Where are we going in Teacher Education*. Within this publication in 1952, Emans highlighted the areas where teaching education needed more enhancement, as well as where the process was on the right track. Because of the values and direction Emans articulated in *Where we are going*, much of this paper will encompass those ideas.⁹

One crucial point that Emans made was the importance of implementing or, the need to devise a professional laboratory for the greater overall experience for the teacher-to-student interaction. These professional laboratories were meant to educate future teachers in the modern theories and practices of teaching through observation and through

⁹ Lester Emans, "Where are we going in Teacher Education," (1952): 1-12, Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI.

interaction with actual students. The labs were on-campus schools, with students ranging in age from kindergarten to 8th grade, depending on the college or the magnitude of the laboratory.¹⁰ Here, college students would have the ability to sit in on elementary or secondary level classes to observe or assist in the process of teaching. College students experienced the curriculum and the environment of a classroom first-hand even before going out and student teaching. However, student teaching out in the field was not as prevalent as it is today. To continue, there was also a formulation of nurture and guidance through the teaching procedures within the lab school. The lab school was the center for students to help develop firm principles and philosophies of education in order to carry those values for the rest of their careers as teachers. Labs of this scale were beginning to make appearances throughout the United States in the late 1940s and into the 1950s.¹¹ This allowed for an in-class evaluation by fellow peers as well as professors to acknowledge and judge the strengths of students and weaknesses of students before they entered classrooms for actual student teaching. More experiences were then provided to create the comfort and confidence needed to apply to future classrooms. The basic doctrines that laboratory schools for education provided were:

An opportunity to implement basic concepts and ideas discussed in college classes- both to study the pragmatic value of the theory and to check with the student his understanding of the theory in application; 2. a field of activity which, through raising questions and problems, helps the student to see his needs (both personal and professional) and to outline experiences which should be included in his further

¹⁰ Lester Emans, "A Notable Professional Laboratory School," *Wisconsin School Board Journal* (October 1953): 54-55, Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI.

¹¹ J.G. Flowers, "School and Community Laboratory Experiences in Teacher Education," *Peabody Journal of Education* 26, No. 2 (Sep 1948): 67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1489982>.

study; and 3. an opportunity to study with the student his ability to function effectively when guiding actual teaching-learning situations.¹²

It was this mindset and group of values that Emans wanted to incorporate and provide for teacher-training at the State College in Eau Claire. He, along with several other Eau Claire faculty knew the impact that a laboratory education school would have on the College. With Governor Rennebohm's approval and the necessary funds provided by the Board of Regents, the planning for a new building for the making of a laboratory education school took shape.¹³ President W.R. Davies, without hesitation, appointed a faculty committee to investigate the needs of the building and review the cooperation of the entire project. Emans, who was Director of Teacher Education (this meant Emans was the overseer of the entire education department, all areas of curriculum and pedagogy were often influenced by him) at the time, was the building committee's chair.¹⁴ Emans, as Chair, realized the responsibilities of creating and fostering the advancement in further education. This lab would allow teachers to interact with students and give them a chance to be subject to a classroom like setting for the very first time. The idea was to allow future teachers to receive the experience of teaching as well as learn the pedagogy to assist them and carry that learning into their student teaching.¹⁵

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Today Marks Great Step in History of College," *The Spectator*, October 8, 1952, Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Emans, "A Notable Professional Laboratory School," 55, Emans Papers.

After the building, which is now referred to as Brewer hall, was complete in 1952, *The Spectator* published an article displaying a portrait of the new building and expressing the significance of it with the heading: "Today Marks Great Step in History of College." This was not only a great step because of the investment of \$1,500,000 for the construction, but it was also the first laboratory school created within the state of Wisconsin (see Figure 1).¹⁶

The building, at the time of construction, was an L-shaped structure with four main units. These units consisted of the content laboratory, the little theatre, an education and psychology classroom, and a physical education department that housed a gymnasium. Along with that, there was an elementary education laboratory section containing nine classrooms, Kindergarten to 8th Grade. In addition, the facilities were built completely around the library which allowed for easier access for teaching accommodations.¹⁷ It was designed specifically with the student in mind. There were also extra classrooms built in order to accommodate larger groups and to avoid remodeling or additional costs in the future. Both, the college students and the elementary students would benefit from this modification. As written by Emans, who advertised the building through the *School Board Journal*: "Every aspect of the new facilities has been planned with the prospective teacher in mind. Every unit has been adopted for the realistic approach to the needs of the teacher in pre-service training. Wisconsin has built for teacher education."¹⁸ Furthermore, within the elementary lab school, one-way view glass was constructed in order to peer into the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 56.

¹⁸ Ibid.

classrooms to be subject to a teaching environment and make observations.¹⁹ The idea was that individuals would be able to see and hear the more natural situations of the classroom. Instead of observing within the class and disrupting some of the students being taught, with the one-way glass, an observer could take notes and talk to their fellow peers, while observing instruction. Yet, they never disrupt the learning process (See Figure 2).

Based on the sources found, the laboratory school was written on, promoted, and publicized by Emans. It is evident that Emans acted as the voice for the education department with the expansion of the program. This building not only shifted the appearance of teacher education within the state, but it also made the Eau Claire campus an attraction to future college students wanting to study within the field of education. Emans would not only be the head of the department of education but a figure head for the lab and the college as a whole.

3. Emans' Education Standards

In 1952, with the construction of the laboratory building underway, Emans emphasized standards that he wanted to create and use for the education of future teachers. His thoughts were based off rigid standards set by other colleges throughout the country. His goal was to create standards that made those strive for excellence and also create a curriculum that was more strenuous than the programs, of the past, that were based solely on content or material. His notion was to create a system that made it more difficult to get accepted into the school of education. The minimum GPA required to apply

¹⁹ Lester Emans, "Pre Service Education of Teachers: Laboratory School House," *Nations Schools* 51, No. 6 (June 1953): 67-69. Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI.

to the program was a 2.0.²⁰ That may seem like a low standard, but today, Eau Claire's minimum GPA requirement is 2.75 to apply to the program. This may seem like a large difference, but it is difficult to determine why there could be such a dramatic shift. However, what should be recognized is that Emans wanted teachers who were qualified. As a college student, proof of your academic skill and determination had to come in the first years of receiving more generalized credits. There was also an emphasis on developing strong linguistic and interpersonal skills that were characteristics desired in future teachers.²¹ There is a rich indication that Emans wanted individuals who were well rounded, bright, hardworking and social. He believed these were qualities suitable for teachers. If prospective students did not possess these qualities, their acceptance into the program would be less likely.

Standards also grew in terms of the length of time spent studying to earn a degree in education. Emans believed the national standard for receiving a teaching license was much too easy. States throughout the nation, including Wisconsin, gave out teaching licenses after graduating from a two year program or even if an individual had a general knowledge of the content in which they would be teaching. Emans argued to enhance the system to at least a four year degree. He said, "Those entering the shorter professional programs be required to meet even higher standards than those willing to complete the one hundred and twenty-eight hour programs (four year program)—the degree in teacher

²⁰ University of Wisconsin Eau Claire School of Education Minutes, 1948-1991. AS51. Box 1. 1958. Special Collections & Archives, McIntire Library, Eau Claire, WI.

²¹ Emans, "Where are we going in Teacher Education," 1952, Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI

education...the higher standards attract more prospective teachers; salaries also reflect additional preparation.”²² His argument displays how a well-thought out four year degree would serve to be beneficial due to the balance of courses a future teacher may be subject to throughout their college career. A two year degree was soon evaluated as too short of a period to graduate and hold a true qualification to teach. Emans sought to constantly remind those in the department that there needs to be a detailed foundation for subject matter.²³ His belief rested on the fear of academic knowledge being too narrow before going into the field. He even described the significance of having secondary education majors assume a degree that would encompass five years to truly promote a diverse arena of study. Having the impact of general education, the lab school and eventually, student teaching, left very little time for the development of content knowledge. In a study done in 1941 and 1951, a comparison was made to the amount of educators in the U.S. who received a two year degree and a four year degree. With the increase in future educators it was crucial that they all receive a well-rounded education for their future. In 1941, only 45% of students obtained a four year degree in elementary education. Whereas ten years later, there was an increase to 70% of students who received a four-year degree as opposed to the two-year.²⁴ This transition nationally illustrates the significance of education of this time frame. A four year degree gave the necessary time to establish the groundwork needed for Elementary Education majors in the field. Therefore, promoting a

²² Ibid., 2.

²³ Ibid., 3.

²⁴ Maul, Ray C., “Teacher Supply and Demand in the United States for 1951,” p. 5. , National Commission of Teacher Education and Professional Standards. Emans Papers, Publications, EC, WI.

program that enhanced both content and pedagogy, may have increased the length of a degree, but it also increased your reputation as a future educator.

Today, many of the standards Emans accentuated are still embodied within our education program. The trend of acquiring a four year degree for pre-service teachers caught on rapidly. Most students who now graduate from the program now need at least four and a half years to finish their degree, not to mention student teaching. Five years is usually looked at as the norm set in today's standards. However, this illuminates the affect Emans' standards still have placed on us today. An education where the content taught and the preparation of pedagogy became crucial and appreciated within the college at Eau Claire. Combining both the area of study with methods to enforce the teaching of that specific education made Eau Claire a driving force for the advancement of teaching curriculums.

4. Wisconsin Education

Emans' research and philosophies expanded beyond the education of students on the campus of Eau Claire. He was a prominent figure for several boards and studies within the state of Wisconsin. One area of study was of classroom teachers and their interests in cooperative curriculum study programs. This type of study, which was relatively new, was an attempt to have teachers from around a specific area or county take part in mutual discussion where they talk about the common problems within their classroom or their school as a whole.²⁵ However, the main reason for conducting the study was to analyze the

²⁵ Emans, "Do Classroom Teachers Believe that Cooperative Curriculum Study Programs are Worth-While?" Emans Papers, Publishing, 1945-1960, Eau Claire, WI. 1-2.

significance of teacher collaboration and if it served any purpose. One particular study was on educators in the Dane County area (The author is unsure of the exact date of the study because there is no date given on the review, but there is evidence to prove that it was written in the late 1940s or early 1950s). In this study Emans summarized the process and also collected surveys from those teachers who participated from the area.

When grouping the various teachers who participated, it was made sure that groups were organized close to the residence of each other and each group was composed of teachers from all levels, from kindergarten to high school. Part of the meeting was devoted to the everyday issues of the classroom teacher and ways in which these issues could be resolved. The continuance of the program was recommended for the entire school year.²⁶

After the study, teacher's comments and criticisms were discussed and recorded. There were mixed feelings about the collaboration, however most teachers found the curriculum study to be beneficial. The positives of the meeting included the informalities and the social aspects. Teachers from other districts of both urban and rural areas felt comfortable expressing their issues within the classroom environment and were open to answers. Some teachers even believed that the discussion could have continued for a longer time, but felt cut off. There was also an acknowledgement of the perspectives within the meeting. One teacher commented: "The discussion of actual immediate problems rather than theory, proved to be a morale builder and an inspiration...I liked getting together with teachers of rural and urban, and also elementary and high school grades, in

²⁶ Ibid., 4.

order to discuss these problems. It makes for a better mutual understanding.”²⁷ It was often difficult to imagine the differentiation of instruction that schools sometimes use. Without connecting with the varieties of environments other teachers are exposed to, often times there can be a block or a tunneling of vision when comparing the curriculum and pedagogies of other school districts. By embracing the assortment of educators, paradigms could shift and the variety of instruction could be applied to new classrooms. This way, it would not only benefit teachers, but students within those classrooms.

However, with benefits also came costs. Although there were a great number of teachers who found the meeting to hold value, several were critical. For one, there was belief that the meeting encompassed too many generalities. There was a difficult time evaluating the picky issues like behavioral management or the structure of time management.²⁸ Even though strong discussions were held, nothing was ever formulated that could be used by all teachers in their designated schools. It seemed as though too much was discussed in such a short period of time, which made it challenging to come to terms on a particular issue. There was also a concern with specific individuals being too overpowering. One teacher commented in the survey: “in one meeting there was a domination of the program by one of the leaders.”²⁹ Although the collaboration may have been comforting to some, it also felt degrading towards others. If one leader was continuing to lead in discussion, there was a lack of democratic conversation among the

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

²⁸ Ibid., 7.

²⁹ Ibid., 7.

group study. As a whole, teachers taking part in the study understood the implication of the state cooperative study program and was encouraged to continue with further modifications.³⁰

This cooperative study that was initiated by Emans, may not have been the most successful collaboration, but it displayed his willingness to attempt new things in order to create a more positive learning environment for students, but also resolve the large problems within the educational system. Through this study, Emans looked to promote a better teacher for tomorrow and create a new system that went beyond just the doors of the Eau Claire campus. The investigation was one of the first in the Wisconsin area and is a study that has expanded and is used throughout districts all over Wisconsin.

5. Restructuring Secondary Education Curriculum

One of the most misread areas of study in the field of education, in the 1950s, was the junior high school. From the creation of the junior high, in 1915, until the 1950s the junior high appeared to be only a transitional school for students.³¹ Often the curriculum that was used either reflected elementary schools or high schools from the surrounding areas. It was almost as if they were seen as miniature high schools, when in reality they encompassed much more. There were few, if any, standards developed and educators had no specialized training in the junior high field. Actually, as of 1958, Vermont and the District of Columbia were the only states that required a specific certification in the junior

³⁰ Ibid., 14.

³¹ R.P. Brimm, *The Junior High School* (Washington D.C.: The Library of Education, 1963): 2-4.

high field.³² Either programs were administered with too much ease, or they were too advanced and they were doomed from the very beginning. Also, the junior high was not only looked at as a steppingstone for students, but for teachers and administrators as well. This was often the testing ground for teachers and administration who desired a job in a high school. Furthermore, if teachers proved themselves as strong candidates for high schools, then they would leave the junior high as soon as there was an opportunity elsewhere.³³ Teachers and administrators would leave junior highs because they did not value the curriculum as they did at the high school level. Finding a job at the junior high school level was easier than at a high school because the certification was so broad at that level. So, incoming teachers took advantage of certain openings in the junior high to build recognition among the district and eventually leave for a high school position when it opened up. The lack of consistency made it difficult to create a structured school where teachers and students recognized each other and gained a sense of comfort. The recognizable answer to the concerns fronting the junior high was through education. Colleges were in the midst of further studies centered on a specialized training for junior high teachers.

Junior high gained the eventual recognition it deserved. Regards grew when facing the immaturity and stages of development of the students at this level. There was a development in new curriculum and standards which gave the school a more unique sense

³² James W. Jordon, "Critical Issues Facing the Junior High School," *The Clearing House*, 34, No. 4 (Dec 1959): 237, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30193495>.

³³ *Ibid.*, 238.

and fit the variance of styles within the age group of those in a junior high. Researchers and psychologists began to recognize that the time of junior high in a student's life is most crucial. With this key point in time in which physical and mental growth occurs, the students at this level are at the pinnacle point of influence. If students have a negative experience at the junior high level, it may affect their growth mentally and emotionally. Even though it is important to have strong high school teachers, teachers at the junior high are just as important. Eventually, the junior high began to experience what was expressed as a "Renaissance period."³⁴ The neglected area was now coming to the limelight. There was no longer a reason to overlook this area of teaching, but rather, enforce its significance. It is believed that because the complexities of the junior high were becoming enumerated, teaching programs throughout the country were reacting. With the fifties coming to a close, "the junior high school vehicle seems to be going somewhere."³⁵

This transition was studied in 1958 and 1959 by the Wisconsin State College of Eau Claire. The first real mention of a junior high curriculum at Eau Claire came when Emans wrote a letter to the members of the department of education on February 6, 1958. The letter discussed the next meeting regarding the whole faculty and the first order on the agenda was related to the appointment of a special committee "to study the teacher education curriculum for the preparation for junior high schools."³⁶ At this particular

³⁴ John H. Lounsbury, "The Junior High: A New Model," *Clearing House*, 30, No. 9 (May, 1956): 558, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30193138>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Lester Emans, Letter to the Members of the Department of Education, February 6, 1958, Eau Claire School of Education Minutes, Eau Claire, WI.

meeting, only two faculty members voiced their interest in researching the option of creating a more specific education program formulated around the junior high.³⁷ With the committee growing interest throughout the year, more research was done and copies of proposals from the Wisconsin Commission of Teacher Education were given to all department members for the study and suggestions of implementing a certification for the specific grades of seven, eight, and nine. By December 16, 1958, there was a proposal brought to the table summarizing the necessities of the future department as well as the department's misunderstanding of the junior high model. The committee wrote:

Secondary Education trained teachers engaged in the junior high school often see only the subject matter phase of teaching. Upper elementary trained teachers in the junior high often lack the needed depth subject preparation...the philosophies of some present college courses are not adapted to the junior high teachers...some of the present courses may have to be redefined in terms of the junior high needs. Several new courses may need to be added to our present catalogue.³⁸

The growing awareness for a revamped junior high program was beginning to take shape at Eau Claire. Although Emans was not the most influential figure during the movement, the author found that he was one of the first individuals to voice his belief and set up a meeting for the further study of the junior high. The refurbished program suggestions were highlighted in January of 1959, with specific courses on the subject of junior high being added to the curriculum (see Figure 3). Education 123 was proposed "to develop a realistic outlook of the junior high school as a dynamic and evolving segment of

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Education Department Meeting, December 16, 1958, Eau Claire School of Education Minutes.

our public institutions. The instructional and behavioral problems unique to this formative age group as well as growth factors are to be considered (See Figure 4).”³⁹ Education 128 was also proposed to outline reading for the Elementary and Junior High levels.⁴⁰ It was these classes, as expressed in figures three and four that helped to implement a more developed and understood early adolescent age group.

The growing awareness for the implemented program came from the study of other college programs throughout the Mid-West. The courses and course outlines that were encouraged were modeled from colleges like Illinois State, the Teachers College—University of Cincinnati, and Iowa State Teachers College.⁴¹ The comparisons in school programming can be made when viewing the appendix regarding University of Cincinnati’s curriculum in comparison to Eau Claire’s (see Figure 5). Through this study, Eau Claire received a dosage of material from other colleges that could assist in shaping their future program. This re-shaping displays the complexities of material taught to future junior high school educators, but it would pay dividends in understanding the multiple prisms taught at that particular level.

³⁹ Junior High Committee, Outline For Proposed Course, Education 123, January 13, 1959, Education Department Meeting, Eau Claire School of Education Minutes, University Archives and Special Collection McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire.

⁴⁰ Junior High Committee, Outline For Proposed Course, Education 128, January 13, 1959, Education Department Meeting, Eau Claire School of Education Minutes, University Archives and Special Collection McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire.

⁴¹ Junior High Committee, Junior High School Teacher Education Programs, 1959, Education Department Meeting, Eau Claire School of Education Minutes, University Archives and Special Collection McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire.

As stated, Emans, as the head to the department of education had an obvious role in the conversion in programing. The studies by the Junior High committee at Eau Claire may not have been directly run by him, but through his guidance and prestige, he realized the responsibilities of creating the advancement in further education.

6. *Student Teaching*

Along with the observing stations the lab school provided, student teaching at off-site public schools was also administered to those at the near completion of their programs. As a committee member under the State Department of Public Instruction, Emans worked with other colleagues around the state to help develop and promote guidelines in terms of field experience for student teachers. It was highlighted that he was a committee member up until 1965.⁴² Emans was incorporated into the studies of student teaching in terms of their roles and responsibilities. As a committee member it was Emans' task to assume the responsibility for meeting the correct standards for student teaching and enforcing those standards on to other staff members at Eau Claire, as well as educational students. It was crucial to recognize the way in which student teaching was managed throughout the state and ways in which it could be altered for the betterment of education. Emans and the committee wanted student teachers to realize that education was more than just content spewed out in front of a classroom. It was voiced that, "Every teacher needs to understand the interrelationships of all phases on the educative process within the school system and

⁴² State Department of Public Instruction, *The Development of Guidelines for Dealing with Field Experience for Student Teachers & Interns*, Wisconsin, 1965, 2, Lester Papers, Department of Public Instruction—Correspondence & Reports, Box 1/Folder 1.

within the community.”⁴³ This meant that as a student teacher, through the acceptance of the public school and the cooperating teacher, the student would have the ability to observe and participate in extra-curricular activities, clubs, coaching, study hall, lunch duty, conferences and other school organizations in order to receive the entire teaching experience. The committee that Emans was a part of displayed the qualities and needs for the future teaching world.

Emans was also a board member of the Wisconsin Association of Student Teaching from 1956 to 1966. He served as the association’s president in 1957, showing the amount of leadership and strong qualities he possessed. From the records, there is a substantial growth in material and content from year to year, which displays the benefits of expanding the functions and programs of student teaching.⁴⁴

There was also an expression of the importance of cooperation between the public schools and the colleges and universities. In one of Emans’ published works, he promoted why it is so crucial to have both worlds work in harmony. Many lab schools, including Eau Claire, did not have classrooms that went beyond the eighth grade level. Thus, the teamwork of student teachers, cooperating teachers and administrators in schools was imperative. He voiced his concerns: “He (the student teacher) can hardly be ready to assume these responsibilities in he has had no chance to prove himself...the principal must be willing to permit the student teacher to take part in all the duties expected of the regular

⁴³ Ibid., 4

⁴⁴ Emans Papers, Wisconsin Association for Student Teaching Materials, 1958-1966, Box 2/ Folder 3. Eau Claire, WI.

teacher.”⁴⁵ In his vision, one of the benefits of student teaching, is promoting new ideas for teachers that were already working. If teachers were not open to new ideas and new experiences, there would be no way to further instruction. Also, he believed that student teachers should not be cheated out of the normal roles of teaching because of the interference of the cooperating teacher. He or she should experience the full effect of teaching, especially if they were unable to experience a lab school.⁴⁶

Several scholars during the 50s and 60s agreed with the approach that Emans and several other educators were taking. Walter A. Mercer argued for improving college and university teaching through the use of student teaching and the incorporation of teaching out in a public setting:

The professional program for teachers must be so designed that its students grow in ability and willingness to understand their society and bring about needed and desired change, and at the same time become teachers able and willing to guide learners toward increasingly intelligent participation in this society. The values sought in teacher education, then, must be derived from the basic values of society.⁴⁷

Lab schools were an excellent addition to the teaching experience for colleges, however, without the role of student teaching off-campus, possibilities to be emerged into an unfamiliar school environment would be much less likely. The experience gave the upcoming educator multiple perspectives and guided their ability to teach with relevant

⁴⁵ Lester Emans, *The Secondary School Principal's Responsibility*, 1960, 4, Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5

⁴⁷ Walter A Mercer, “Teacher Education Laboratory Experiences,” *Improving College and University Teaching* 11, No.2 (Spring 1963): 110-111, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27562228>.

pedagogy and become acquainted with certain learners in order to meet the needs of their students. Nevertheless, with the expansion of student teaching during this time period, some educational theorists only saw the complexities of student teaching.

Gary A. Griffin wrote on the issues that student teaching faced in the past, and still face in modern times. For one, he argued that the absence of research regarding student teaching can discredit its use.⁴⁸ With a lack of research, student teaching could have difficulty proving how beneficial it could actually be. No quality knowledge can be brought to the forefront in favor of student teaching. Also, colleges and universities tend to operate in isolation of one another, making it more difficult to collaborate on ideas brought from colleges and incorporated in a classroom setting. It is also believed that the relationship between the two also favors colleges. He argues that teachers at the public schools do not get paid to assist the student teacher and they also give up prep time to enhance the experience for the student teacher.⁴⁹

Ultimately, there is evidence to display how much Emans valued the student teaching program. Although there have been efforts in attempts to dissolve the program, the validity of the experience outweighed the arguments against it. Student teaching is essential, not only for the experience, but it also gives you a hands-on approach to grow as a learner and a teacher.⁵⁰ Accordingly, Emans saw the future of education resting on the

⁴⁸ Gary A. Griffin, "A Descriptive Study of Student Teaching," *The Elementary School Journal* 89, No. 3 (Jan 1989): 344-346, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1001807>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 348.

⁵⁰ L. Marshall Nagle, "Some Effects of Student Teaching Patterns upon Professional Attitudes," *The Journal of Educational Research* 52, No. 9 (May 1959): 355-357, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27530246>.

shoulders of student teachers. If they were not granted the ability to teach in various environments, these teachers along with their futures, and the futures of all, would be affected.⁵¹

7. Speeches and Influence

With the abundance of titles and the impact Lester Emans contained in terms of education, his linguistic abilities also played a role in reinforcing his ideals. In January, 1959 Emans gave a presentation at the *Wisconsin Teacher Education and Professional Standards Meeting* in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. The presentation consisted of the college preparation of teachers.⁵² Throughout, he voiced how the “professional education of teachers must be the concern of all higher education institutions in Wisconsin.”⁵³ It is apparent that this speech was essential to the public because of his comments he made on it almost fourteen years later. In the top left corner, with the date reading: “9/27/73,” Emans wrote: “One of my very best presentations,” and signed his initials. If one particular presentation sticks with a person, it is probable that it affected more than just himself.

Upon the commemoration to those who received honorary recognition as education students, Emans spoke focusing on the *Pursuit of Excellence*.⁵⁴ In his speech he quotes

⁵¹ Lester Emans, *Emans' Honor Day Address: In Pursuit of Excellence*, 6, Lester Papers, 1961 Publications & Speeches.

⁵² Lester Emans, *The Professional Education of Teachers*, Presentation given in Stevens Point, WI. Professional Standards Meeting, January, 1959, Lester Papers, Publications & Speeches.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Man's Emerging Mind to stimulate the crowd to greater heights: "A teacher is not simply one who imparts knowledge to students but one who awakens their interest in it, and makes them eager to pursue it themselves. A teacher is a spark plug, not a fuel pipe."⁵⁵ Throughout this entire speech he emphasized how vital a strong education can be and creates an undertone that encompasses the quote throughout. This speech holds eminence because he includes how there should always be a questioning of philosophies and theories, in order to display progress, not only as a teacher, but a human being. He pointed to the questioning of the paths we choose throughout our lives and how those paths may, one day, leave a lasting impression on other individuals within society.⁵⁶ Through his rhetoric he stressed the administration of excellence, not just in college or through your profession, for the entirety of one's life. Due to the address's focus on future teachers, he positioned the expression on the duties of these teachers to instruct and inspire future generations years from now.

8. Conclusion

Dr. Lester M. Emans may not have gained the recognition that the prestigious few who have their names carved on several of the UW-Eau Claire buildings, though the strong impression he had on the university and the state of Wisconsin will be recognized by those who excavate for dominant figures in education during the 1950s and 60s. His determination in studies, organizations, and implementations still ring true, just without

⁵⁵ *Man's Emerging Mind*, quoted by Emans, *Emans' Honor Day Address: In Pursuit of Excellence*, 1, 1961, Lester Papers, Publications & Speeches.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

his name attached. The standards that he laid foundation to are still promoted within the educational system seen today. His ideals of progression and refurbishment of instruction within colleges and throughout schools will be instilled for generations to come. The notion to bring about change through the subsequent times experienced displays the drive he embodied.

It was his belief that through the association with others, books, and the influence of teachers that stimulate to great heights, goals can always be met. Through the use of the seasoned Eau Claire motto, Dr. Emans expressed the true meaning of success: “May I remind you that in the Pursuit of Excellence the goal must be, first of all, sufficiently far away to give direction, but still close enough to be accomplished.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Ibid., 3.

Appendix

Figure A. 1: Laboratory Schoolhouse (June 1953)



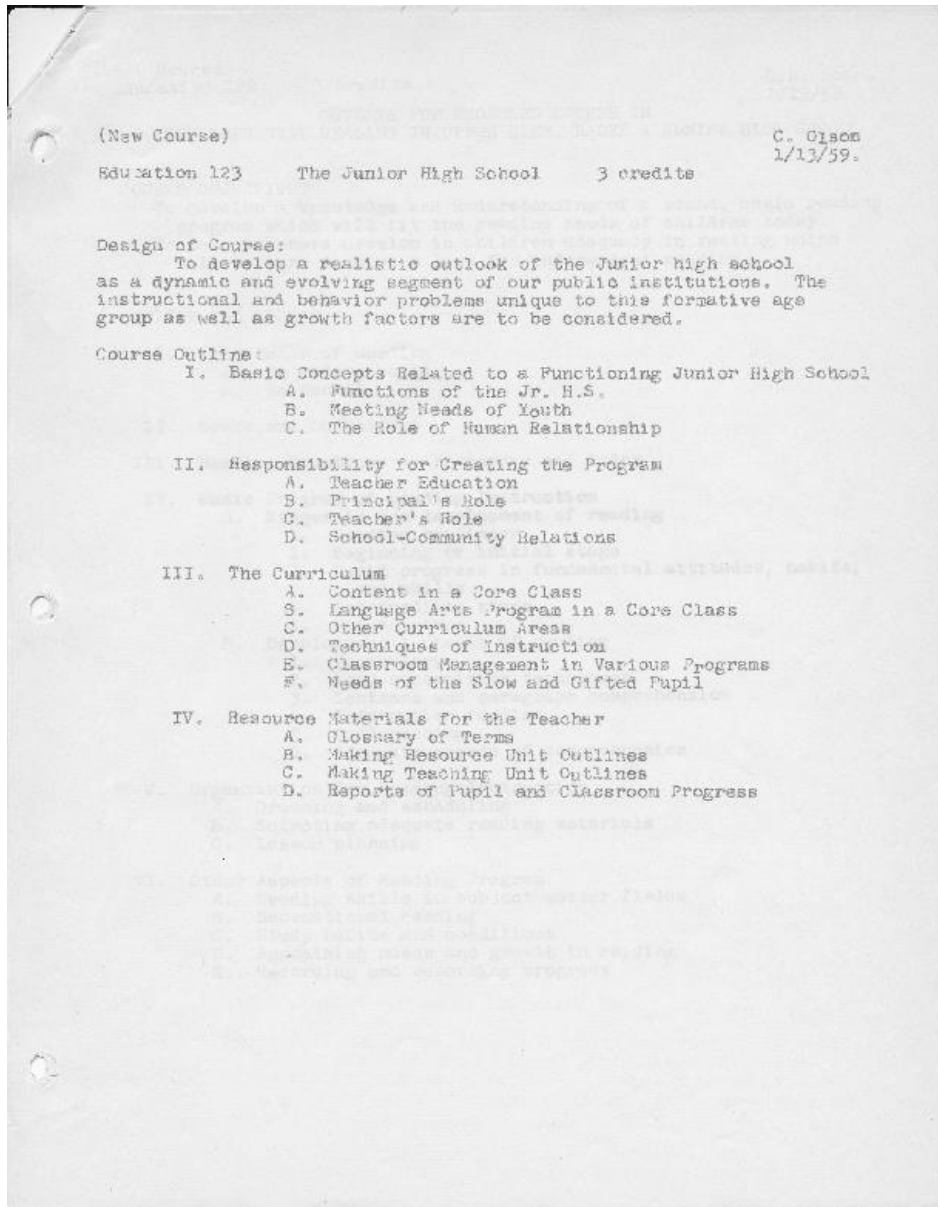
Source Accessed: Lester Emans, "Pre Service Education of Teachers: Laboratory School House," *Nations Schools* 51, No. 6 (June 1953): 67, Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI.

Figure A. 2: Students observe a class in session through the one-way glass within the Lab School (October 1953)



Source Accessed: Lester Emans, "A Notable Professional Laboratory School," *Wisconsin School Board Journal* (October 1953): 54, Emans Papers, Publications & Speeches, Eau Claire, WI

Figure A. 4: Course Design for Education 123 (Jr High)



Source Accessed: Junior High Committee, Outline For Proposed Course, Education 123, January 13, 1959, Education Department Meeting, Eau Claire School of Education Minutes.

Figure A. 5: Actual Junior High Teacher Program of University of Cincinnati

Senior Year:		Semester Hrs.		2nd Semester		Semester Hrs.	
1st Semester				Student Teaching 210			
Student Teaching 210		4		Intro. to Phil. of Ed. 203		4	
Education		2		Elective		3	
English		2					
Elective		3					
	Total	15 hrs.		Total	15 hrs.		

Handwritten notes:
 Eng. - 17
 Phys. Ed. - 3
 Soc. - 3
 Phil. - 9
 Total Education - (23) hrs.
 Education - (22)
 Psych. - 1 hr.
 Elective - (2)

Teachers College - Univ. of Cincinnati
 ('57-'58, pages 45-47)
 B.S. in Education

Junior High School Teacher Education program:

	Credit Hours	
	1st Semester	2nd Semester
<u>Freshmen year:</u>		
Eng. 001, 002, Freshmen English	3	3
Ed. 101, 102, Intro. to Ed.	3	3
Phys. Ed. 191, 192 Physical Ed.	3	1
Sci. or Soc. Studies (Approved)	3-5	3-5
Electives in Teaching fields	6	6
Total	15-18	15-18
<u>Sophomore:</u>		
Eng. 201, 202, Sophomore English	3	3
Psych. 231, 232, Ed. Psych. & Human Dev.	3	3
Phy. Ed. 291, 292, Physical Education	3	3
Approved course in Sci. or in the Soc. S	3-5	3-5
Studies	6	6
Electives in Teaching fields	6	6
Total	15-18	15-18
<u>Junior:</u>		
Ed. 307, 308, Prin. & Pract. of Sec. Ed. (including Evaluation & Measurement)	3	3
Ed. 305 Org., admin. & management an approved course in speech	3	3
An approved course in philosophy, logic, religion, fine arts, or practical arts	3	3
Electives in teaching fields	6-9	6-9
Total	15-18	15-18
<u>Senior:</u>		
Ed. 438, Student Teaching & Conference	2	6
Methods course in major teaching field	15	9
Elective teaching fields	17	15

Handwritten note: Ed. 438 (6-9)

(Students in (above) program are eligible for certification in special fields in grades seven through twelve.)

Source Accessed: Junior High Committee, Junior High School Teacher Education Programs, 1959, Education Department Meeting, Eau Claire School of Education Minutes.

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