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An appraisal of National in metallurgy on Tees-side

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Dunning J. (1967) An appraisal of National in metallurgy on Tees-side. Masters thesis, Durham University.

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Abstract of Thesis

As a result of the observation of the poor quality of students entering National Certificate courses at Cleveland Technical College, Redcar, it was considered valuable to make a detailed study of metallurgical students at five Tees-side colleges.

Chapter I

In order to appraise the subject fully, it was decided to examine, through the City and Guilds of London Institute, the historical background that led to the development of National Certificates and their adoption on Tees-side. Almost a complete cycle of events can be traced through the City and Guilds course and if the now established technicians course develops in content it may make the Higher National Certificate unnecessary without overcoming the criticism of a high failure rate.

Chapter II

Turning to the students, the first task was to inspect records and make a statistical survey from the five colleges, four of which transferred students at the end of S2 to the fifth and main centre. This was open to the weakness that four of the colleges were not directly involved in metallurgical studies, nor could they operate viable classes for metallurgical students alone. The majority of students were from Grammar schools and were involved in quality control jobs. Although the job situation and the system of part-time education played its part in failure, the colleges could not feel proud at the excessively high failure rates they experienced at Ordinary National Certificate level.

Chapter III

Students were asked to answer a questionnaire and this was followed by a random sample interview of one in five. The pilot run

was made at Coatbridge Technical College in order to remove ambiguity in the final run. The main conclusions from the questionnaire and interview were:

1. Lack of relevance of course content to job situation.
2. Course too academic.
3. Lack of metallurgical topics at an early stage.
4. Not enough time to study course content.

Chapter IV

It was concluded from these investigations that the course of study ought to be designed with a minimum overlap of subject content, but with an emphasis on the interdependence of one subject on another and a course which has a relevance to the job specification. The course should be based at one centre with the metallurgy department being the parent department in order to ensure a deep metallurgical bias throughout the course.