

### The Outcome

The plan outlined above was duly followed and 92 students of the year 10 cohort of 133 were entered for the examination in May 2001. Would our decision be vindicated? The results day in August was awaited with a mixture of anticipation and trepidation. We had the usual concerns about the success rate of the Year 11 students who had followed the usual pattern of GCSE Humanities over the two years but also the first set of results from our experiment added to the tension. The results show that at this stage the experiment had been a great success.

The Year 11 students (top table) produced another great set of results with 68% of the year group achieving C grades and above and 25% gaining A\* and A grades. The Year 10 students were equally impressive. Of the 92 students entered, over 78% achieved higher grades. It was disappointing that 15 students (11%) missed out by one grade but the analysis of the results showed that in 10 cases this was by a mark of less than 4% and we would hope that these students will achieve their C grade in the 2002 examination. Even when the results take the whole cohort into account (bottom table) it shows a "pass" rate of 54% and as the Yellis predictions for the year group were for 55% A\*-C grades over the two years, it is a highly creditable performance after just 12 months. We are confident that many of the 61 "unsuccessful" students will achieve their C grade in the summer of 2002 after a full two year period of study while over half the year group will go on to gain C grades or higher in their single subject choices.

### The Gender Differential

Whatever happens in the coming months, one of the most pleasing aspects of the 2001 results is the relative performance of boys and girls in Year 11. The usual gender differential was still a feature with 82.5% of the girls gaining higher grades compared with a relatively low 56.3% for boys. However for the Year 10 group it was virtually nonexistent. An analysis of the CAT scores has revealed no marked difference in ability between boys and girls in the two year groups. This would suggest that the boys have indeed responded positively to the increased pressure and short term targets they have been set. It will be interesting to see if there is any difference in the performance of

the boys and girls who re-sit, or take the examination for the first time, after the full two years watch this space.

### The Future

This clearly is an ongoing experiment. We have repeated the process for our current Year 10 students and intend to continue for a further year at least while we analyse next year's results. There have been problems. The GCSE syllabus reviews for 2003 have been an added complication and have involved extra research and tweaking of our curriculum plan. There is the issue of compulsory RE in Year 11 that in the past was delivered by the GCSE Humanities syllabus. We have yet to discover the views of inspectors to this curriculum innovation. Our next inspection is due in Summer 2002. It has also involved the Humanities staff in a huge amount of work and added pressure with the extra curriculum planning, coursework marking etc. but we have shown that it can be done and can bring about a marked improvement in the achievement of students in the humanities subjects. The results are enclosed on a separate sheet.

### A Personal Note

I am fortunate to have had the backing of a dedicated group of colleagues and there is no doubt that such a major curriculum innovation could not have been achieved without their complete support, good humour and commitment. To all the Humanities staff of the Maelor School,

Jan Binley-Jones  
Sian Jones  
Graham Reardon  
Rob Quinn

Thanks guys I appreciate everything you have done and I know the students do also!

Dave Lewis  
Head of Humanities

If anyone would like further information about the WJEC Humanities syllabus, or how we operate the KS4 Humanities curriculum, please contact me at:

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