**Reflection 1st July 2013**

In preparation for the final ICT lesson, we introduced the subject/ question of the ‘Sport v Library’ debate, with each group having been given a paper copy of the statement slips, glue and a couple of sheets of A3 paper. They were told to complete the usual ‘reading’ element of the process, but this time without ICT. I put the sub questions on the board periodically, to help them to ‘frame’ the discussion.

The discussions were really successful; they sorted and arranged the statements before gluing them into position on the A3 sheet. They also added some statements of their own, using ACTUAL post-it notes this time.

Interestingly, and without any prompting from me, they sorted the slips and then ‘rank ordered’ them in terms of importance. I think this was a key moment. I’m not certain what it signifies, but I was really pleased that they were engaging at this level of their own volition. I think they were very comfortable with the notion of creating an ‘argument’ in this way. Obviously a lot of information/research/ideas had been provided for them, but they related well to the information, and this was probably the activity in which there were more ‘additional slips’ generated by the groups than any other. After a few minutes, one student even identified the fact that there was a ‘gender’ dimension to this discussion. I had included this as one of the key questions for the most advanced students, and the fact that he had picked up on this at such an early stage frankly surprised me.

I paused to discuss the advantages of ordering the statements, and linked this to the skills involved in the evaluation of evidence when drawing conclusions. I know that this is important in History, and we also considered that this would help in many other curriculum subjects as well.

A couple of students expressed the opinion that they would rather complete mystery tasks in this way, as opposed to using the computers. However, I suggested to them that the reason they were doing so well was because they were familiar with the technique, and if they were using used paper and glue for the first time without having first used the ICT they wouldn’t have been working as efficiently. They did accept this, and I noted that an advantage of using the machines was that there was much less need for lengthy preparation (cutting out sheets, laminating etc.), and that regular (but not relentless) use of the strategy could help the students to become more ‘expert’ in the process, and that this would improve the learning outcomes.

In the next lesson, we will go straight to the ‘writing’ stage, and we will be able to see if the progress made in structuring texts continues. Having marked about a third of the Greek Mythology essays, I notice that most that have been checked so far have attained a decent level 7 for AF3 and AF4. The essays themselves probably wouldn’t be awarded level 7 overall, but this is more to do with the fact that the students are still in the process of developing a mature writing style, and that the quality of their written expression needs to improve. Also I believe the ‘late switch’ to a more persuasive task may have hindered their achievement in AF2, and that a clearer focus from the beginning (such as we have with the Sport v Library debate) will help their overall marks.