**Addendum to Reflection 1st July**

Having looked at the A3 sheets that were handed in at the end of the ‘non-ICT’ lesson, I noticed that the statements had been very carefully arranged and, in one case, colour coded to show the group’s findings. I wonder therefore, if there is merit in the idea of giving the groups a ‘screen shot’ of their grouping and sequencing stages as part of the ‘print out’? I feel that this could be helpful. (I’ll bring their planning work along to the lesson tomorrow for your comment.)

I am also still concerned about the design of the essay plan when it’s been issued. I doesn’t seem especially ‘student friendly’ to me: It wasn’t until they had seen my exemplar essay last week that I felt they understood what they were aiming for in terms of their written outcome. It is very useful to be able to ‘click and drag’ the statements across into the plan, and I think this is crucial for improving the structure and use of evidence in their essays. However, it could also lead to the submission of lots of essays that are very similar to each other, and I fear some lower-ability groups would hand in work that was mainly produced as a result of ‘copy and paste’. Would it be possible to make a clearly distinguished and allocated ‘space’ for them to include their own text/make additional points on the plan, so that these were more obvious and easy to identify? It may be that the issue is not with the design of the plan, but with the students’ understanding of the way the plan is generated, but - either way - I’m looking at one of the print-outs now, and it doesn’t seem to be very detailed, nor would it be easy for a student who had missed a lesson to use it to generate their response. (In fact, this was the position one girl was in last week; she has more or less had to write a response ‘from scratch’, simply using the printed out statements).

To refer to an earlier observation, the structure of their work has clearly improved. However, I’m not sure how this strategy would ever be able to help students address the focusses of e.g. punctuation, or creating a text of a particular genre. (AF6 and AF2 respectively). I remember from writing the mysteries last summer that I found it difficult to create resources that could explicitly lead to the creation of e.g. a persuasive text, rather it was better to produce a range of evidence/comment for their perusal, and then ask them to write their argument based on the material studied. This also means that a ‘narrative’ is difficult, unless it’s in the ‘Media’ sense of a ‘narrative’ as the ‘coherence/organisation given to a series of facts’.

It is obviously unreasonable to expect any piece of software to cover every aspect of the teaching of students to produce good quality writing. However I think this strategy can be very useful in key areas such as the processing and evaluation of evidence and the structuring of a response. If there are limitations in its usefulness, it could be argued that these are balanced by its significant advantages.