

## Multiple Use of Authentic Connected Text

Alan Crawford, Critical Thinking International, Inc.

In many literacy and critical thinking contexts around the world, a shortage of authentic text is a real problem. How can teachers find enough text to keep students interested and

Authentic connected texts can be used more than once by a class during an academic year. After teaching a lesson with a text, wait about one month. Then teach another lesson with the same connected text, but at a higher level the second time. Ask more difficult higher order questions. Raise the level of writing required to respond to the text. Now you have two lessons from the same text.

Do the same with a second text. Now you have four lessons from two texts.

Finally, wait several weeks once again, and then conduct a lesson with both texts together. Ask your students read both texts in the new lesson. Ask questions that require them to compare and contrast the two texts. For example, you can ask how two folk tales are similar. You can ask how they are different. You can ask what would happen if a character from one text was substituted for a character in the second text. How would the story change? You can also ask students to write about the two texts, comparing characters, settings, etc.

You can do the same with informational texts. For example, if two texts are about protection from malaria, they may make different recommendations. The students can compare and contrast the recommendations. They can express their opinions about the recommendations and they can share their own experiences with malaria. They can write about them, as well.

Now there are five lessons from two connected texts.

You can also use a narrative text and an informational text on a related topic as your two texts. In an African context, for example, you could use a folk tale about elephants with an informational text about the damage that elephants cause to farmers' crops. Teach two lessons about the folk-tale at an interval of several weeks, the first at a lower level of thinking, the second at the level of critical thinking. Teach two lessons from the informational text in the same way, one perhaps related to science and the second to economics a few weeks later. Wait a few weeks once again, and teach a fifth lesson in which the two texts are compared and contrasted.