PURPOSE:

This is a prewriting strategy that can help students learn to write using more detailed descriptions, etc. It can also help them understand how the Europeans felt on that river boat, going into unknown territory that seemed strange to them. This helps them imagine what it was like on the riverboat. They can see images in their minds; they use the creative side of their brain, so they are using both right and left sides. After they see these images, they will write them on paper in the form of a writing assignment.

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1: Get ready.

Put on a CD of rain falling, or some calming music you enjoy. (For example; Celtic Flutes by Lifescapes, Celtic Mystique by Howard Baer, etc.) Ask the students to get in a comfortable position. They can lie down on the floor, sit on the floor, sit in their desks, whatever position they are most comfortable in. Turn off most of the lights.

STEP 2: Read the following adaptation (from pgs 42-43) of Heart of Darkness. Allow time in between phrases for the students to think and imagine.

Close your eyes.
Imagine you are sailing a riverboat on a river...
There are thousands of huge trees all around you...
What do the trees look like?
How do the trees make you feel?

Smith, BYU, 2008
You are drawn forward, up the river.
There is someone you want to meet there.
Is there a breeze?
What does it feel like?
Is it warm, is it cold?
The engine of the boat is loud, is it making strange noises?
Are you worried about the boat, is everything running OK?
The smell of rotting hippo is on the boat, from the Hippo for the Africans onboard.
How does it smell?
The sun is setting.
What does it look like?
How much do you see through the trees?
What does the river look like?
Is it clear, is it muddy?
Is it moving rapidly, or calmly flowing down?
The sun has set.
How does the darkness feel?
The roll of drums emerges from the curtain of trees.
What does it sound like?
How does it make you feel?
What does it mean?
Will you be attacked?
Is it a peaceful sound?
Is this part of a religious ritual for these unknown tribes?
The night moves on.
What are you thinking?
You lie down in your cot on the boat.
Now fall asleep.
Slowly, journey back to the classroom.
Wiggle your toes, return back to your consciousness.
When you are ready, open your eyes.

STEP 3: Now, turn the lights back on slowly, when you see they are returning, and opening up their eyes. Make sure you do this gradually, it can be very harmful if you force them to return too quickly.

STEP 4: Ask the students to take out a piece of paper. Give them about ten
minutes to describe what they felt, saw, heard, smelt. They can draw something if they would like.

ASSESSMENT:

This strategy has no real “assessments” required. It is simply a strategy to help your students visualize what is going on in Heart of Darkness at this point and perhaps come up with some ideas as to why the people react in the way they do. It also is meant to help them connect these images with what they read in the text.