Purpose: The directed reading-thinking activity is used to help students become more critically aware by guiding them through a process of prediction, verification, judgment and extension of thought. The teacher will read a selection of the text with the students and will stop at pre-determined places to ask the students to stop and think about the passage and make predictions. Three main questions can be used to guide the students in making these predictions. They are:

What is happening?
What will happen next?
Why do you think so?

Directions:

Step One

Tell your students that they are going to begin reading a new text, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, together as a class. For this activity, students may read along with you, or you may read aloud to them to help them understand the flow of the dialogue and to make sure they are not reading ahead. Begin with the title of the book and read until page 21 when the Tragedians enter the scene.

Step Two

Show students the title of the book. Ask the students who Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are, then ask them why the title would indicate that they are dead. Encourage the students to draw from their knowledge of *Hamlet* to think about who these men are and why they are said to be dead.
Step Three

Begin reading Act One. Stop after the description of Rosencrantz’s bag of money being nearly full. Ask the students the three questions to try and find out why the varying amount of money in the bags might be important.

Stop again at these pre-designated points to ask the three questions and discuss:

- Page 14 “GUIL:...What would you think?” Ask the students to draw on what they know of Rosencrantz to predict his response.
- Page 15 “ROS: I’m afraid—” Ask the students why they might be afraid. Ask them then, if they would be afraid in the same situation.
- Page 16 “ROS: Heads” The next line, Guildenstern is going to list more possible reasons why the coin continues to land on heads. Ask the students what they think the other reasons Guildenstern will come up with might be.
- Page 17: Guildenstern has a long speech in which you may want to stop a few times throughout to clarify and make sure the students understand and are following along.
- Page 18 “I have heard the sound of drums and a flute...” Ask the three questions.
- Page 19 “that man, a foreigner, he woke us up—” Who is this foreigner and why was he waking them up? Read Guil’s line “A messenger” and ask what message he could be relaying.
- Page 21 Guil talks of “mystical encounters,” What is he talking about or possibly referring to?
- End when the Tragedians enter. (page 21)

Step Four

Discuss what they have just read. Were their expectations from when they just heard the title met? What do they think this play is going to be about? What have they learned about the characters or Rosencrantz and Guildenstern so far and how do they think the characters will act throughout the rest of the play?

Step Five

Assign the students to read the rest of act one on their own and make predictions along the way. Have them come up with at least three predictions during the text and have them write down their stopping point and their thoughts and predictions that went along with it. The students can have the rest of the time in class to get started on the assignment, or it can be take-home only.

Assessment: Student participation in the class discussion will show their ability to understand and become involved with a text. Step Four should prepare students to make predictions and shape their own ideas as they continue to read the play on their own as well as in class. Step Five will give students the opportunity to practice making predictions on their own and hopefully gear their minds toward prediction making even when it’s not an assignment.

Culp, BYU, 2009