

Friendly Talk Probes

Friendly Talk Probes are two-tiered questions presented in the form of a scenario in which friends, family members, or familiar adults talk about a concept related to the topic of study. The probes may be used to engage students in surfacing and examining their preconceptions as well as solidifying concepts and applying understandings. Each of the two “characters” in the scenario makes a statement about the concept. One is correct; the other is not. Students are asked to pick the person with whom they most agree and explain why.

The strategy may be used to engage students in thinking about the concepts they will encounter during their instructional experiences or as an application of students’ learning following the conceptual development phase of instruction. Regardless of placement in the flow of instruction, it provides students the opportunity to share their ideas and justify their thinking.

How to implement the strategy (Summarizing):

1. Design or choose a probe that uses examples and non-examples related to the content being studied.
2. Base distracters on commonly held student misconceptions.
3. Give students time to individually consider the points of view.
4. Have students choose the character with whom they most agree and write a justification for their choice.
5. You may place students in small groups to discuss their choices and come to consensus about which character is correct.
6. Lead a whole class discussion on the probes. Develop a final class consensus on which character is correct.

Adapted from:

- Keeley, P. (2008). *Science Formative Assessment: 75 Practical Strategies for Linking Assessment, Instruction, and Learning*, Thousand Oaks CA. Corwin Press.