

▼ FEELINGS /OPINIONS /PERSONIFICATION QUESTIONS

GOAL: To motivate kids and their teachers
To value a child's opinion

KEY: Partnering

Experts say it isn't professional to single out one student as the teacher's pet. However, just this once, I must make an exception. Of the four questioning processes, this is my favorite. Feelings/Opinions/Personification questions are a powerful, exciting teaching tool for me. The truth is, I like these questions on a personal level. They are part of me, part of who I really am. I enjoy modeling these questions as well as teaching them.

Researchers characterize these as **viewpoint/ involvement** questions. They literally pull teacher and student together on an emotional level. And I like that.

There is an interesting "*fringe benefit*" with these questions. Feelings/Opinions/ Personification questions will open the door to **motivation**. The hidden force that motivates is **emotion**. These questions are charged with emotion, especially when they fit the student's age, interests, and abilities.

PARTNERING is the most effective way to introduce students to this form of questioning. It is easier to establish comfort level in partners than in groups. In the beginning it is best for the teacher to choose the partners and to switch partners every few minutes until students feel comfortable working with several different learning styles. The first examples begin at a low risk level that reinforces trust between the teacher/facilitator and student.

FEELINGS /OPINIONS: Are They One In The Same?

The words *feeling* and *opinion* are near-synonyms. However, in the questioning process it is necessary to separate them because it is possible to have strong feelings about something and not have an opinion. I may have strong feelings about abortion. On one hand, I may feel personal choice is paramount to our survival as a democracy. On the other hand, I may feel life is a precious gift to be nurtured and protected. I may not be able to formulate an opinion.

It is also possible to have an opinion about something and not have strong feelings. For example, in my opinion *Diet Pepsi* is better than *Diet Coke*. I really don't have strong feelings about that opinion. (I'll drink either one in a pinch!) That doesn't mean opinions are trivial. On the contrary, just ask me about one of my passionate causes, such as gifted children, and I'll cloud up and rain all over you with opinions and feelings!

