

1 WAY TO TEACH LAB EQUIPMENT & PRACTICE CER

Big Idea

A few years ago, I wanted to find an easy way for students to practice writing conclusions and supporting them with evidence and reasoning - also known as CER - without having to do a complicated lab or a case study. At the time, I was planning to have students learn about lab equipment, when I thought about combining the two: learn about lab equipment and practice CER.

Instructions

I had students take out and look at some lab equipment and answer the following question:

"What is this piece of lab equipment used for? Explain using the CER - or claim, evidence, reasoning - format."

To answer this question, students need to observe an object's form and relate it to its function.

For example, consider the graduated cylinder. What is it used for? Well, let's consider its form. It's got these very detailed markings on the side. It's got a groove at the top and a wide base at the bottom.

Now, let's answer the question through a CER statement.

- Claim: A graduated cylinder is used for measuring out and pouring liquids.
- Evidence: Graduated cylinders have a spout, detailed markings on the side, and a wide base.
- Reasoning: the markings and wide base make it easy to pour in and measure liquids accurately, and the grooved spout makes it easy to pour out or transfer those liquids into other containers.