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Cer anchor chart

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I was introduced to the Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) strategy when I worked at an elementary school that required its use in every subject. Initially, I had doubts about applying this language-heavy approach to my English language learners, but after using it more, I became a strong proponent. Now, over a decade later, I still utilize CER with my adult language learners. This strategy is effective for any subject, whether identifying an author's claim, evidence, and reasoning or ensuring one's own writing includes these elements. To implement CER effectively, you need to explicitly teach its use and provide plenty of practice opportunities and reminders. Here are some ways I teach and utilize CER in my classes: CER Posters: These posters feature the words "Claim," "Evidence," and "Reasoning" with accompanying questions for reading and math. They serve as a permanent fixture in my classroom, providing students with easy reference. Graphic Organizers: I provided graphic organizers to support my students' understanding of CER, especially since they were English language learners. These turned out to be incredibly beneficial, helping their writing improve significantly. There are two versions: one for ELA and one for math. ELA Version: The ELA version has four sections: Topic/Theme, Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning. Students use this organizer to analyze texts, identify the author's claim, evidence, and reasoning, and write summary paragraphs when necessary. Math Version: The math version also has four sections, which proved effective in helping students approach word problems and respond to prompts on standardized tests. The implementation of Critical Evaluation and Reasoning (CER) in math classes led to a unique opportunity to combine subjects and objectives. In an eighth-grade science class, students were struggling to grasp the scientific method, so I designed an assessment that would test their understanding while also reviewing ELA objectives. The activity involved analyzing advertisements and applying the CER process to identify claims, evidence, and reasoning. Students then used the scientific method to design experiments to test the validity of these claims. The worksheet/graphic organizer guided students through the process, asking them to: 1) identify the claim, evidence, and reasoning in an advertisement; 2) ask a question to guide their investigation; 3) gather credible sources of information; 4) write a hypothesis; 5) design an experiment with variables, control groups, and steps to follow. The final two steps of the scientific method were left for students to complete. The activity allowed for great discussions as a whole group and individually, helping students develop critical thinking skills. Students felt like they weren't taking a test while completing the assessment, which led to accurate results in distinguishing between independent and dependent variables. Overall, I was proud of their mastery of scientific method vocabulary just in time for a standardized test. We combined two activities, CER and CRAAP, to help students distinguish between true and false news. As we did for all parts of the CER instruction, we worked together as a class before having them try it individually. The two-page worksheet is divided into two sections: CER and CRAAP. Students identify claims, evidence, and reasoning in an article by asking questions like "What claim does this article make?" and "What evidence do they present to support their claim?" They also analyze the author's authority, purpose, accuracy, currency, relevance, and bias. Next, students apply the CRAAP criteria to evaluate the article. They examine the publication date, relevance, author qualifications, and supporting evidence. Finally, they write a paragraph defending whether they believe the article or think it's fake news. I've only used this activity with high-intermediate and advanced students, but you can use it with lower-proficiency students if you source articles from ELL-friendly sources. This activity is featured in an English Skills book for level four. Another speaking practice game I use is CER: The Board Game (with a digital version available). My students love it, especially the unscripted speaking practice that doesn't force them to use specific grammar rules. As a teacher, I believe that students should be encouraged to express their opinions respectfully. In my classes, we practice this by engaging in spirited yet respectful discussions on various topics. The game helps us achieve this goal and has even led to the development of persuasive strategies. The prompts used in our discussions are designed to elicit strong opinions, such as whether capital punishment should be abolished or if animals should be used in medical testing. These controversial topics allow students to think critically about different perspectives and develop their own arguments. I have also incorporated dice rolls into the game, where students must use specific persuasive strategies for each response. For example, rolling a 1 might require them to cite famous people who support their opinion, while a 2 might prompt them to rely on statistics or research. This added element challenges students and helps solidify their understanding of different persuasive techniques. In conclusion, I was initially hesitant about implementing this approach but now consider it an essential part of my teaching practice. I highly recommend that others give it a try, as the benefits can be truly transformative.