

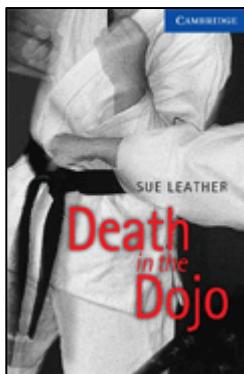
## Creative learning and teaching with readers

### Sue Leather

#### What's in a story?

How can extensive reading of original readers help students to learn English? *Cambridge English Readers* have the primary aim of getting students involved in the story, and only secondarily of 'teaching them language'. This is what makes them effective.

One way of getting students involved in the story is to read part of the first chapter, for example, of my level 4 reader *The Amsterdam Connection*. The story is a thriller and the first chapter ends with a dead body. The students can work in pairs and answer some questions about the chapter set by the teacher in advance. Instead of reading the story yourself, you could play the excellent CDs that accompany the readers. They are very well read and give the students some variety.



Reading the first chapter to them is a good way to whet the students' appetite for what comes next. Another way of getting students into a book is 'choose and tell'. Students choose an original reader they like the look of. They then go back to their seats and tell their neighbour why they've chosen it. Was it the cover picture, the blurb on the back, the colours...?

The activities above are ways of getting your students into reading, which can be a challenge sometimes. Have you tried using chapter headings to do this? A good activity is to get your students to look at the chapter headings in a reader and come up with alternative titles.

Try this speaking activity. 'Why you should read this book' is about getting students to give short, one-minute presentations on the book they've just read, trying to sell it to their classmates. In this case again, less is more. Ask students to make it 'short, snappy and memorable'.

You could also dramatise part of *Death in the Dojo*, where my protagonist, Kate, is lying on the floor injured. Take the part of Kate, lie on the floor and groan, while students try to find out as much as possible about the story by asking you questions. This activity can be used to get students into a story too.

What's in a story?... Incredible potential for creative learning and teaching.