

Episode 5: The Company

Teachers call books published by Heinemann their bibles. The company's products are in schools all over the country. Some of the products used to teach reading are rooted in a debunked idea about how children learn to read. But they've made the company and some of its authors millions.



EPISODE 5

Episode Length	Link to Episode	Link to Transcript
47:22	https://www.apmreports.org/episode/2022/11/10/sold-a-story-e5-the-company	Printable Transcript
Additional Optional Materials	Video of Calkins introducing the Units of Study program	

Questions and Topics for Discussing “The Company”

Before Listening	What thoughts come to mind as you read the episode description?
While Listening	There are a lot of numbers, dates and dollar amounts in this episode. Consider making note of them while you listen.
After Listening	<i>From a teaching perspective:</i> In this episode, you heard: Emily Hanford: “Heinemann books didn’t need that much marketing.” Temple Ireland-Rosenberger: "I would call it social media before there was social media. Right? Like it was, the social media was in the school. It was, I’m gonna pass you my book, I’m gonna pass you this thing. ” - How do ideas spread in education today? - How are those ideas being vetted (or not)? Learning that Gay Su Pinnell bought a Maserati caused a stir among some listeners of <i>Sold a Story</i>. - Did it seem unfair to include that detail? Why or why not? - Were you surprised to hear about the money that has been made by Heinemann and its authors? - What other dollar amounts, dates and numbers caught your attention and why?

	<i>From a parenting perspective:</i> Matt Burns says that reading levels are unreliable: “I give the kid the test one day, it’s a G. The next day it’s an I. The next day it’s an E. The next day it’s an F.” • Does your child’s school use a leveled reading system? • What information do you get about your child’s reading ability? <i>From a community perspective:</i> In this episode, you heard about the lack of evidence to support the Fountas & Pinnell leveling system and you also heard about a big study that raised questions about the effectiveness of Reading Recovery. • What do you want schools to do with this information? Missy Purcell says she wants Calkins, Fountas & Pinnell and Heinemann to be “held accountable.” • Do you agree? If so, what would that mean? <i>From a student perspective:</i> • What surprised you most in this episode? • Does your school use leveled books? ◦ Do you think your level reflects your reading ability? Why or why not?
Wrap Up	• What are some reasons reading research hasn’t had much impact on how schools teach reading?
Extend	<i>Activity 1</i> Watch this video of Lucy Calkins describing the Units of Study program and write down the claims she made about her program. • What process does your school district go through to vet programs? <i>Activity 2</i> • If your school uses leveled books, what will you do with them now that you’ve heard this episode? If you are looking for ideas, consider reading some lessons that Margaret wrote.   VIDEO LESSONS

We’d love to hear about your *Sold a Story* discussion!

- Email us: soldastory@apmreports.org
- Leave us a voicemail message: (612) 888-7323