

“TAKE A MOMENT AND IMAGINE IT!”

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“Could the full integration of a child’s imaginary friend help positively promote academic, social, and emotional development?”

-The Inquiry Question At Hand

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

My Teaching Context and How My Inquiry Question Developed:

During the 2004-2005 school year, I had the pleasure and privilege of working as an intern in a self-contained second grade classroom at Ferguson Township Elementary School. In my particular classroom, I had twenty-two students, only eight of whom were girls. Boys made up the remaining fourteen children.

Throughout the first semester, I engaged in a case study about one of these fourteen boys. Edward was extremely talented in the visual arts, he seemed to ooze with a sort of creativity that even his peers noticed. During casual teacher-student conversations at recess or at lunch, I would ask for the names of some of the most “artistic” people in the class. The overwhelming majority would list my case study, Edward, in the top three choices, mainly because he had a tremendous imagination and because he was also an excellent artist.

Despite the fact that his talents were well-recognized by the class, there was always something else unique, and in my opinion, much more intriguing about the boy. He was always accompanied by a small, stuffed, light-brown dog, which he named DinoThunder. At first glance, DinoThunder seemed to be nothing more than the object of a child’s attachment, something very common in second grade. However, as I got to know my case study, I also got to know a lot more about DinoThunder and my boy’s close relationship with it. By the end of the first semester, I could only characterize his infatuation with the stuffed animal as much more than an attachment, and closer in relation to that of an imaginary friend.

Teaching Edward always proved to be a unique, if not challenging experience. His imaginative nature sometimes hindered his interest in some of the concrete subject matter that we covered. His desire to engage in artistic endeavors and create fantastical stories for DinoThunder seemed to consistently put all other scholastic activities on the back-burner. For a long time, my mentor and I discussed the nature of Edward’s thinking. Was his non-conformity a symptom of a greater power struggle, or was his non-conformity simply a matter of an innocent conflict of interest? As we thought about it, we brainstormed

about ways to reconcile his imagination to our demands. I hypothesized that Edward's relationship with DinoThunder was a key factor to why we often did not see eye to eye. This hypothesis led me to a very interesting question over what DinoThunder, as an imaginary pal, could mean to Edward in second grade.

A bigger question soon entered my thoughts as I wondered about the effects imaginary pals could have on classroom academics and general policy. After all, it has been both a well-established and well-accepted idea that all students are individuals with unique styles of learning. It has even been promoted that the school system should attempt to accommodate all of the wide ranges of learning styles. Despite it all, some students (such as Edward) sadly never seem to feel comfortable within it, as his numerous tearful breakdowns could testify. Could it be that the importance of role-playing, creativity, and imagination (and its impact on the development of children) become slowly neglected over the years? Surely we have all heard of instances where the push to meet standards has caused teachers to forgo "fun," and yet educational, activities. Many children "seem" to adjust. However, I soon thought about the few children that must feel incredibly left out, perhaps even slighted and incapacitated. Creative children and those others that thrive on the experiences that imagination and role-playing can offer has been suffering from teachers' inability to meet their learning style. Standards may not be the only factor to explain why Edward and the teachers conflict. It could also be the simple matter that educators do not understand the significant role that the pure imagination of living with an imaginary pal can play in the lives of children. It could be that educators are left blank with ideas on how, if not whether or not, to adapt their classroom to the likes of Edward.

In the end, this was the field I wanted to research. The wonderings I just described formed the backbone to my inquiry. I wanted to know how widespread the use of imaginary pals in the classroom was. I wanted to gain a deeper perspective into how an educator could fully embrace imaginary pals in order to help exceptionally creative children develop on a social, academic, and emotional level. I had earlier read that, in the past two years, new research on the impact of imaginary pals on elementary school children (by the University of Washington with the University of Oregon, as well as a separate study by the Max Planck Child Study Centre in Manchester, England) seem to question previous assumptions by developmental psychologists. Based on such fairly recent research and its connection with my yearlong experience of interacting with "imaginary pals" to promote the academic and social development of students, I ultimately came to the important question: Could the full integration of a child's imaginary friend help positively promote academic, social, and emotional development? If it could, how could teachers reconsider their classroom policies in order to preserve the active existence of an imaginary pal in a child's educational experience in school?

Summarization Of My Inquiry Question And The Sub-Wonderings That Led Up To It:

Inquiry Question:

Could the full integration of a child's imaginary friend help positively promote academic, social, and emotional development?

Sub-wonderings:

- 1) Was Edward's non-conformity a symptom of a greater power struggle, or was his non-conformity simply a matter of an innocent conflict of interest?
- 2) How widespread is the existence of imaginary pals in the classroom?
- 3) How could an educator fully embrace imaginary pals in order to help exceptionally creative children develop on a social, academic, and emotional level?
- 4) How could teachers reconsider their classroom policies in order to preserve the active existence of an imaginary pal in a child's educational experience in school?

Past and Recent Studies on "Imaginary Pals"

Much of modern developmental psychology was pioneered by the Swiss psychologists, Jean Piaget. Due to any high schooler or college student's seeming inability to escape studying his theories, he may (arguably) be recognized as one of the most influential developmental psychologists in history. His theories on childhood and development have long been respected, if not even accepted, by those in his field. One of his theories involved what it meant for a child to have imaginary friends. Piaget, who was, ironically, one to encourage the idea of imaginative and pretend play as a developmentally healthy activity, suggested that a child with a profoundly deep and interactive relationship with an imaginary friend was simply "reflecting immature thinking" and compensating for a lack of development in some other aspect of life (Young children get by with, 2005). More often than not, this would refer to a lack of social development. In other words, Piaget assumed that a child with a relationship with one or more imaginary friends was making up for having too few friends, if not having any friends at all. Even to those who have not studied psychological concepts in depth, this theory seems to make sense. After all, the idea of love and companionship is accepted, even in mainstream society, as not only things to be desired, but also as things that all humans need. Lacking friends could easily be equated to a deficiency in love and companionship. Therefore, the creation of imaginary friends would make a lot of sense, especially given the acknowledged creativity of a young child.

With this idea of what an imaginary friend may mean to child, Jean Piaget suggested that parents (and educators) try to wean their children away from imaginary pals by searching for and fixing the child's field of developmental deficiency. Jean Piaget was especially alarmed to the prospect of children with imaginary pals past the age of six or seven. To him, this was evidence of a prolonged deficiency.

Parents were encouraged not to interact with their children's imaginary pals and to discuss the differences between things that are real and imaginary. As a result, parents were encouraged to ignore imaginary friends altogether (Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow & Charley, 2004).

Much has changed in the past decade, however. Since the early 1990's, a lot of research has been completed. Many of these studies have outwardly disputed Piaget's idea that children's imaginary pals disappear after early childhood. In fact, one study in 2001 found that 28% of children between the ages of 5 and 12 have had imaginary friends (Pearson et al., 2001; Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow & Charley, 2004)

In more recent years, particularly between 2001 and 2004, the University of Washington joined with the University of Oregon to complete a 3 year longitudinal study of 100 children with imaginary friends. They found, first and foremost, that approximately 65% of all children have had an imaginary friend by the age of seven (Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow & Charley, 2004). More interesting, another 1/3 of the children studied continued to maintain their imaginary friend past the age of seven. This was certainly much more than Piaget and developmental psychologists had originally anticipated. Furthermore, the study also found that the occurrence of relationships with imaginary pals could extend to as far as fifth grade. One conclusion from this study stated the following:

One of the lessons to be learned from this research is that fantasy is alive and well in the lives of school-age children. In fact, play with imaginary companions was at least as prevalent in our school-age sample as in preschool children. We were able to collect interesting descriptions of these imaginary companions created by older children and discover new information about them. For example, the majority of imaginary companions played with by older children are invisible, whereas in younger children at least half are based on props such as special toys . . . The descriptions of the imaginary companions were diverse and often highly imaginative, but we suspect that interviews focused more specifically on how imaginary companions function in the children's lives would be useful for investigating the developmental correlates of this type of role play for school-age children. (Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow & Charley, 2004)

In an interview with the Seattle Times, Professor of Psychology Stephanie Carlson (UW), one of the researchers in the project, explained that their new findings emphasized "the main message to parents [on] how common imaginary friends are, even with children older than previously studied . . . Parents shouldn't be concerned if elementary-school-age children still engage in this form of play" (2004). Evidently, recent studies have been acknowledging the idea that older children, beyond the previously held notion of 7 years, are actively engaging with imaginary friend relationships. Furthermore, such

developments should not be alarming. One very interesting theory that was put forth by the University of Washington and Oregon study in order to explain the reason why this phenomenon was not noticed earlier was stated in the report as follows: “Given the tendency of older children to act out fantasy less overtly than younger children, parents might underestimate the ages at which imaginary companions are abandoned or be unaware of newly created ones” (Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow & Charley, 2004). Indeed, those researchers, themselves, found that 27% of the children that they studied described imaginary friends that their parents did not know about (Young children get by with, 2005).

The research over imaginary friends did not stop with the study at the Universities of Washington and Oregon. In fact, starting in March of 2005, researchers at the Max Planck Child Study Centre in Manchester, England, began another study in the field, juxtaposing twenty children with imaginary pals with twenty children without imaginary pals. According to an article by the Guardian on March 1, 2005, “Researchers are investigating whether having an imaginary friend might help children to develop language skills, boost creativity and retain knowledge” (Oliver, 2005). In fact, the leader of the research, Anna Roby appeared to follow suit with the Universities of Washington and Oregon by challenging Piaget’s theory on imaginary pals with the statement, ““Children with these kinds of companions have strong imaginations and are often very creative, which can be really useful to them as they develop”” (Oliver, 2005). Clearly, the interest in the field of imaginary friends is growing. If it does turn out that imaginary friends are positive indicator of creative prowess and advanced development (something I too suspected), its impact on the field of education and classroom policy would have to be drastic in order to accommodate and even encourage imaginary pals as a means for learning.

MY PLAN FOR INQUIRY

How I Carried Out My Inquiry and How I Collected Data

When I considered my inquiry question, I had to first define what I meant by the term “full integration.” As I thought about it, I realized that I was really wondering whether or not treating an imaginary pal (such as DinoThunder), with the respect afforded to the typical second grader, could help focus a child’s imagination and creativity. I needed to create an imaginary-pal-friendly environment, in which children could feel comfortable with exposing their pals. I wanted to see if, as a consequence, creative imagination could be harnessed to promote social and emotional development, as well as an increase in academic productivity. Therefore, my first step to setting up the research would be to begin treating DinoThunder as the twenty-third student in class. I needed, first, to have Edward buy into the idea that I too understood the importance of DinoThunder. Gaining DinoThunder’s trust would be

crucial if I wished to study his role in Edward's life. In my attempt to insert myself into Edward and DinoThunder's relationship, I would oftentimes chat with both characters. Talking with DinoThunder never became too complicated as Edward simply switched his voice as we communicated. Before long, and with surprising ease, I was able to gain the comfort from Edward to discuss DinoThunder and his relationship with him.

After I had gained Edward's and DinoThunder's trust and comfort, I turned my attention to ensuring that the rest of my students would also buy into Edward's relationships. As a result, I would sometimes refer to DinoThunder in the middle of lessons, talk to DinoThunder in front of Edward's peers, allow DinoThunder to talk and participate, accept written assignments with inserted references to DinoThunder and "Dino Dan Land" (his fantasy home), and encourage other students to interact with DinoThunder as well. In addition, I began the process of observing and pinpointing other students with relationships with imaginary pals. Although I did realize that other students did not have as tight and as developed a connection with their imaginary pals, I rationalized that accepting them could only promote the idea that imaginary friends (not just DinoThunder) were welcome. I was happy to observe that I had achieved an imaginary-pal friendly classroom when I noticed the following:

Signs That Told Me That My Classroom Was Imaginary-Pal Friendly

- 1) I was able to communicate with DinoThunder
- 2) Students could talk to and about DinoThunder
- 3) Other students would introduce me to their imaginary stuffed animals on almost a daily basis
- 4) The children were able to play with their imaginary pals (during recess, for example) without any inhibition.

That being said, I also chose to do minimal promotion and exploitation of such imaginary characters. Just as a teacher would not go out of his or her way to single out and promote any particular student, I chose to leave both the appearance and disappearance of each imaginary character up to its creator. I also chose to proceed along this path because I understood that imaginary characters have a secretive and personal element involved. Therefore, the sharing and outward use of such pals would have to be decided upon and performed by a child who felt comfortable doing so.

When the classroom was finally close to ideal, I proceeded to collect my data by observing the activities and effects of a fully-integrated, imaginary-pal-friendly classroom. My primary target of observation was, as expected, Edward and DinoThunder. After all, these two characters provided the most comfortable, explicit, and therefore most convenient showings of child imaginary pal relationships. Starting on January 20, 2005, I began keeping four logs of what I deemed as significant social, language, management, and miscellaneous showings in Edward and DinoThunder's relationships. I would take

observational notes on a daily basis, select important observations at the end of each day, and record the “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “how,” and the possible “why” for each observation. Of course there were many days during which I felt that there were no significant observations. Those days were, of course, not lacking in imaginary activities, but were just a matter of everything going as expected with nothing occurring that was worth special attention. I also took many photographs throughout the semester to help me “catch” students in action as they played and interacted with their imaginary friends.

In addition to taking photographs and observational notes, I conducted three interviews. I first interviewed Edward with DinoThunder. This interview provided a lot of insight as well as a lot of implicit information about what Edward saw in his pal. Second, I interviewed Edward’s mother in order to understand Edward’s parents’ idea of DinoThunder as well as their overall home life. Third, I interviewed another student, Thomas, who I later discovered was also deeply involved with imaginary friends. The information that I gained from each interview was extremely valuable. They gave me a clearer idea of DinoThunder’s role in Edward’s life, especially outside of the classroom. Talking with Edward’s mother, I was also able to connect some of his home life with his experiences at school. I was even able to receive some suggestion on how to use DinoThunder as a subtle means to managing Edward and teaching him important ethical questions (these points are not included in the report, but may be found with the interview summary in Appendix B). Indeed, if I had more time to further my observations and research, I would have loved to interview Edward and his mother many more times.

In addition to interviews, I also created an extensive survey of all the second grade teachers in the district. As I had mentioned earlier, an important sub-wondering regarding my inquiry was what a positive finding on imaginary friends could mean for the education field and classroom policy. In order to study this sub-question, I needed to know what the current state of classroom policies were throughout the district. This was my rationale for incorporating a survey that aimed to possibly verify published findings on how widespread the imaginary-pal phenomenon really was, how aware teachers were of their students’ imagination, and what their policies were in regards to imaginary friends.

The last forms of data I collected were samples of Thomas’s and Edward’s written and artistic works. In fact, Thomas provided a written piece specifically about imaginary pals, including how to get one, and even how to maintain them. As for Edward, ever since the first semester, I had noticed that his written works were very telling of his motivation and language arts development. They also revealed a lot about DinoThunder and what DinoThunder could do to Edward’s creativity. During my case study at the beginning of the year, I even observed an evolution in his style of writing. Most of his samples included DinoThunder as either a central or secondary character. Allowing Edward to write about DinoThunder increased the quality and productivity of his writing, so much so that it allowed me to teach advanced writers workshop mini-lessons solely to him.

How I Analyzed My Data

After collecting my data, I set to work by organizing and analyzing all of what I had collected. The daunting task was made less complicated due to my earlier attempts to tailor each form of data collection to a particular realm of related interests. For example, most of my observations were made to provide evidence of how I helped create a friendly environment for imaginary pals. The interviews were tailored to give me a deeper understanding of DinoThunder's role in Edward's life, a way of helping me consider the background of children with imaginary pals. The surveys were tailored to give me a base from which to address important sub-questions on how a positive finding on imaginary characters could affect existing classroom policies. Finally, my collection of Edward's written and artistic works was tailored to provide evidence of DinoThunder's influence on academic productivity. With these ideas in mind, I found a plethora of raw data, some of which were very telling in themselves. I gained this collection of raw data by analyzing each form of data collection in the following way:

Analysis of Observations:

Because Edward was anticipated to be the most visible form of a child-imaginary-friend relationship, making detailed observations of his activities made a lot of sense. I had hoped that by recording such events, I would be provided data from which I could search for tendencies and patterns. Indeed, this was truly the case as I slowly began to amass a jumbled list of observations separated into my logs' four categories (information and excerpts from these logs will be referred to in support of some of my concluding claims).

However, the benefits of my observations were not limited to amassing records of specific events relating to imaginary friends. In fact, as I followed Edward, I soon caught a revealing glimpse of his friendship with another boy named Thomas. Unlike Edward, who sometimes lacked social maturity, Thomas was quite possibly the most popular child in class. He had many friends, and played with both boys and girls. His empathy was, perhaps, the most impressive, as he was able to demonstrate an understanding toward the feelings of his classmates. My mentor even once said this about Thomas: "I can see [him] doing something in public relations when he grows up." It was, thus, no surprise that Thomas and Edward were friends. Edward wanted to fit in, and Thomas invited him into a friendship. However, I also began to notice subtleties in Thomas's behavior towards some of his stuffed animals that seemed to parallel Edward's relationship with DinoThunder.

As I studied Thomas a little bit closer, I was able to find signs in common with Edward in his relationships with stuffed animals. At the time, I had only an inkling that Thomas must also have an imaginary friend. The signs were there, although I would need Thomas to verify that such signs did represent imaginary-friend indicating behavior. This verification soon came in my talks with Thomas,

who also later wrote a piece about imaginary friends and also granted me an interview with an imaginary-pal named Elmo. To me, this verified that the signs I sought in my observations did help indicate the existence of imaginary pals. This verification was profound because it gave some credibility to the signs I was observing. In my observations of not only Thomas and Edward, but also the rest of the class, I began searching for the following signs of imaginary pal relationships, which I will sporadically refer to as “Imaginary Friend Indicating Behaviors:”

- 1) **Signs of affection:** Examples include students who kiss, hug, and sweet talk to their imaginary pal.
- 2) **Signs of Personal Connection:** (Connected to Signs of Affection) Examples include students who exhibit such outward activities such as writing and drawing about their imaginary friends, and setting food aside from snack or meals to feed their pals. In my experience, this usually indicated a highly-developed relationship.
- 3) **Signs of Spatial Consideration:** Examples include students who make room for visible or invisible entities when walking, sitting, or even moving.
- 4) **Signs of Imaginary Personalities:** Examples include students who describe their imaginary pals with such personifying characteristics as likes/dislikes, preferences, hobbies, home-life, and other friends and interests.

These signs were common between Edward’s and Thomas’s relationship with imaginary pals. They were also common signs that other teachers told me that noticed as they observed their own students who had confessed to having imaginary pals. It was through such signs which I was finally able pinpoint at least three other students that exhibited those characteristics. These students, Student A, Student B, and Student C all had stuffed animals to which they were seemingly attached. All three of them demonstrated aspects of Signs of Affection, Spatial Consideration, and Imaginary Personalities. With the separate verification of these three students by Edward and Thomas, there was strong indication, but no proof or confession, that Students A, B, and C also had imaginary friends.

Analysis of Interviews:

After conducting the interviews with Thomas, Edward with DinoThunder, as well as the interview of Edward’s mother in March (as I was wrapping up my research), I realized that I would have benefited greatly by conducting a more longitudinal study of numerous interview data throughout the year. In other words, my research might have yielded more information about both Edward and Thomas’s backgrounds had I conducted interviews throughout the semester (beginning in January). I came to suspect a gradual and perhaps evolutionary change in Edward’s relationship with DinoThunder

after conducting the interview with him and DinoThunder as well as the interview with his mother. Having data from interviews earlier in the year might have been able to bring forth more conclusive evidence of what I was now suspecting. Nonetheless, the interviews were most effective in their verification of findings from the Universities of Washington and Oregon.

The interview with Edward and DinoThunder (summary provided in Appendix A) yielded a lot, mostly because it provided an answer to one of the burning questions I really hoped to have answered. This question on whether or not Edward truly understood that his pals were pretend was the driving force behind the interview. Indeed, even for the interview itself, I needed to know if I was talking to two real personalities, or really just one. After a series of roundabout questions that probed for implicit answers, I finally had to ask my subject directly, “So, are your friends real or pretend?” Edward’s reactions were that of surprise that I would even ask the question. DinoThunder and the rest of his imaginary friends were pretend. This revelation was consistent with the Universities of Washington and Oregon’s conclusion that most kids did understand that imaginary pals were fictional and purely creative.

The interview with Edward and his mother (summary provided in Appendix B) was even more telling. The experience provided a lot of background information, giving me a better angle from which to view Edward and his relationship. Edward’s mother’s testimony about home life gave me a lot of information about DinoThunder and her son. Edward would tell me very little about his insecurities. In fact, I was not the only one dealing with this problem. Edward, after all, seemed to express little of what he felt to anybody. However, Edward’s mother was able to direct me in a path that could help expose some of Edward’s insecurities and effects of daily life. She said that by observing how DinoThunder interacted with Edward in its role as an imaginary friend, one could come to pretty good conclusions about things that might be bothering him. For example, it bothered Edward that in first grade, a kindergartener was taller than him. But for the longest time, Edward would not say why he was expressing sadness. This left his parents guessing, until one day, they observed that DinoThunder was upset at another imaginary friend for being younger, and yet taller. Through the observation of that incident, Edward’s parents were able to conclude that Edward was bothered by his lack of physical growth at the time. Of course, this method of understanding Edward was already in the works as I made daily observations of DinoThunder’s relationship. However, it was heartening to know, through the interview, that this process of studying Edward was credible and successful.

In addition to describing the ways I could study Edward and DinoThunder, Edward’s mother also gave me a more detailed history of DinoThunder’s existence in Edward’s life. I learned Edward’s infatuation with his imaginary friends was so involved that, at one time, DinoThunder had to be present during piano recitals to calm him down. Furthermore, DinoThunder even had to be present during meals, where the family even set out separate plates to accommodate DinoThunder. In the meantime, my

interview also revealed much about how Edward's parents even successfully used DinoThunder to manage his behavior and teach lessons on honesty (descriptions of which can be found in Appendix B).

Finally, the interview with Thomas was very powerful (summary in Appendix C). For a while, I had been intently following and observing him around the classroom, getting to know some of his many imaginary friends. By the time I actually conducted the interview, there were many questions that I hoped to have answered, such as whether or not he also understood that Elmo was pretend, whether or not imaginary pals could help students learn, and even whether or not our classroom was friendly enough for imaginary pals to feel comfortable. Having these questions answered would be important for my ability to make generalizations and conjectures regarding imaginary friends. Thankfully, Thomas was very thoughtful and very helpful. We spent approximately 15 minutes discussing the intricacies of his friend, Elmo. He discussed how Elmo helped Thomas play with him and deal with problems. He even talked about what Elmo did in "imaginary world." After all of that, however, he was still able to back up information that I had gained from the interview with Edward by also stating that he understood that imaginary friends were pretend, and not real. However, he disputed Edward by implying that his imaginary pals were mainly for social purposes and not particularly for academic aid. Indeed, this interview was unique and gave great cause for me to juxtapose the three interviews in search of commonalities and differences.

Needless to say, a lot of the information provided gave me insight into children's thought process and priorities. The interviews provided specific information about the importance of imaginary friends to their creators. More importantly, I was able to use specific information and cross-check them with statements made by the other interviewees in search of ideas that I could generalize. While the issue of whether or not imaginary friends were real or pretend was sufficiently resolved by the interviews alone, much of my other wonderings could not be answered by just these three conversations. However, I was able to build up conclusions to other wonderings as I compared the interviews with my observations, surveys, and other published works for verification. I even compared my interviews with students' written works for evidence of academic development.

Analysis of Surveys:

The surveys I created asked questions that would give me an idea of how much fellow second grade teachers knew about their students' imaginary characters. I also wanted to know about the different kinds of classroom policies regarding such imaginary pals. After all, I was assuming that policies that were unfavorable to imaginary friends, and which were compatible with Piaget's thoughts, were most likely in place. This form of data was probably the most statistical, as I made multiple comparisons between the many answers that teachers provided. A raw summarization of the figures regarding teacher involvement with imaginary friends can be found in Appendix E.

Clearly, the information from the survey was an excellent indicator of the state of classroom policy and teacher perceptions in regards to imaginary friends. The survey provided many numbers to analyze. The raw data simply told me that the majority of classroom policies did not really consider imaginary friends in their midst. In fact, through numbers alone, imaginary friends seem to be almost non-existent in the majority of classrooms. This was a very telling piece of information that, after comparison with data collected by other published reports, seemed to expose some sort of a discrepancy with the findings of other studies. Nevertheless, a strong majority of teachers seem to believe that the use of imaginary friends (if they did exist in class) could be helpful in the development of students, particularly in the development of peer/social relationships. Comparing this data with data collected from my observations, interviews, and written works also suggested how the general state of classroom policy has affected imaginary friends, and how it could possibly be altered in support of using imaginary friends to promote class management as well as academic and social development.

Analysis of Written and Artistic Works:

From the very beginning of the year, I noticed that Edward would much prefer to draw out his stories during writer's workshop, instead of write. During the first semester, we discussed Edward's preferences and attempted to think of a way to resolve that preference to draw with our demand that he write. In order to develop the resolution we were seeking, we tried to understand Edward's point of view and why it was so important for him to be so visual in his storytelling. After some observation and analysis of his writing, we noticed that almost all of his writings had at least a mild connection with DinoThunder. This sometimes seemed to limit the range of topics about which Edward could write about. However, we also noticed that no matter what we asked the class to write about, Edward managed to somehow fit DinoThunder into his story, even if it was as subtle as mentioning the imaginary world in which DinoThunder lived. For example, in **Figure Sample A** (Transcribed in Transcript A), Edward wrote a story, "How the Unicorn Got Its Horn," in which we had assigned the topic, main character, and conclusion. Nevertheless, Edward managed to fit an element of DinoThunder into the story by referring the setting to the imaginary world of DinoThunder called Dino Dan Land. In fact, the story began, "Once upon a time there live a mother unicorn and a father unicorn. They lived in unicorn land in Dino Dan Land."

Edward's writings provided evidence to the importance of imaginary friends in not only his social life, but also to his academic life. Our struggles with Edward also came hand in hand with our unawareness to the importance of his imagination. After we acknowledged the importance of DinoThunder and all of Edward's other imaginary friends, we began to see a noticeable drop-off in tearful breakdowns and events of defiance. In fact, my observations recorded only one remarkable breakdown and two events of outright defiance. In comparison to the approximately three breakdowns and

numerous acts of defiance from the first semester (approximations are due to the fact that my research did not begin until January), this was tremendous improvement.

Edward's other written works from throughout the year provided evidence of other academic improvements after we acknowledged the worth of DinoThunder. In fact, I collected a series of written samples that demonstrated a progression of Edward's writing style throughout the year after we compromised on a way in which Edward could continue to draw DinoThunder if he began to produce more written works.

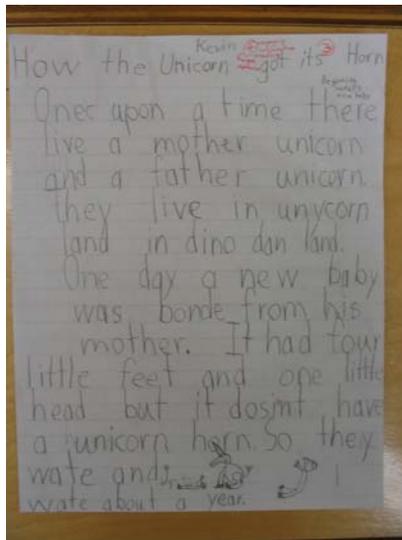


Figure Sample A: In this writing sample from January, Edward was given a specific topic, "How the Unicorn Got Its Horn," to write about. With the main character and direction of the plot already dictated, it appeared that Edward would be unable to make references to DinoThunder. Nevertheless, he found a way to make such a reference by placing the setting in "Dino Dan Land," the imaginary world in which DinoThunder lived (Refer to Transcript A).

Thomas, on the other hand, did not contribute as much in terms of written works. This was mainly due to our later recognition of his imaginary-pal relationships. However, one of the most helpful and revealing pieces of written samples in my collection was a "book," which openly discussed imaginary friends. A lot of what Thomas wrote about implied much about the importance of imaginary friends in regards to a child's sense of security, and ultimately, social development. In comparison with other pieces of data, his writing helped verify and support other conjectures I had already made about imaginary pals and their role in the classroom.

WHAT I LEARNED AND NOW KNOW

List of Claims of I Now Know As Well As Supporting Evidence

Claim 1: Most second grade teachers are unaware of the widespread use imaginary pals among their students, and creating an “Imaginary-Friend-Friendly” Environment may cause other Imaginary Pals To Emerge. Therefore, teachers should ensure that their classroom environment is optimal for cultivating the comfortable expression of imagination and creativity.

During my yearlong observation of Edward, first as my case study, and then as the primary focus behind my inquiry research, I began to notice that other teachers were interested in my topic because they could not fathom the thought of having to deal with imaginary pals. It seemed as though many teachers were unaware of the possibility of actually having students with imaginary pals within their own classroom. After reading the research from the University of Washington and Oregon, I began to believe that more students than we might typically assume have relationships with some sort of imaginary entity. At first, the weight of this thought fell solely upon the possibility that I could extend my research beyond my classroom by surveying the situation within other first and second grade classrooms in the State College Area School District. As I pursued this angle of research, while actively constructing an imaginary-pal-friendly classroom, I began to notice an interesting relationship between two genres of evidence. Together, these two pieces of evidence provided strong support to my claim that most second grade teachers are unaware of the widespread use of imaginary pals within their classroom, and by simply creating a safe environment in which imaginary pals could flourish, many of these pals would likely emerge.

As the responses to the survey I had issued out to the second grade teachers in the district slowly trickled back, I began to notice a lack of information regarding imaginary-friend situations in other classroom. The primary reason for this was because most teachers felt unqualified to answer the more specific questions about classroom policy regarding imaginary friends. Many of the teachers simply held the belief that, because they were not visible, there were no imaginary-friend activities in their classrooms. As the survey summary in Appendix E shows, only 3 out of the 12 teachers that responded reported any signs of imaginary-pal activities. The remaining 9 teachers denied any current experiences with imaginary pals, some even denying the experience throughout their entire career. At first, I was dismayed, and even considered scrapping all of my surveys because they failed to provide insight to my initial wonderings. Luckily, I elected to save all of the surveys, for I soon noticed (in my daily observations) that my own imaginary-pal-friendly classroom was slowly beginning to yield signs of relationship between other students and imaginary pals. In fact, in early March, I observed that Thomas

was beginning to emerge as a student exhibiting a deep relationship with unaccounted numbers of imaginary pals, some that were physical and other that were invisible. One of the most telling events showing such a deep relationship was when I caught him tucking his stuffed “Elmo” into a basket and then kissing it goodbye as he hurried to join the line before lunch. That day, I recorded the following image (**Figure Claim 1A**) to document the event, from which I began to view Thomas as involved in a highly developed relationship with at least one imaginary pal:



Figure Claim 1A: This is a photograph (from March 3, 2005) of Thomas’s imaginary pal, Elmo, with which he had just engaged in relationship-indicating behavior before lining up for lunch. Such events led me to believe that Thomas had relationships with imaginary friends, something to which he later confessed.



Figure Claim 1B: This is a photograph (from March 3, 2005) of another student, using a stuffed animal, engaging in relationship-indicating behavior with one of Edward’s other imaginary pals, DinoTiger1. Such events led me to believe that the student may have had imaginary-friends. However such assertions were inconclusive at the end of my research.

It was also around this time, when we began to notice that three additional students were exhibiting conversations and physical relationships with stuffed animals that appeared to indicate possible imaginary-pal relationships. In fact, my suspicions were verified as I interviewed both Edward and Thomas, both of whom responded with the same three names when I asked the question: “Who else in the class has imaginary friends?” In **Figure Claim 1B**, I managed to document an instance in which one of these boys’ stuffed animals interacted with Edward’s DinoThunder during a read aloud at the carpet.

Indeed, had it not been for the initial awareness of the existence of imaginary pals in second graders, as well as my active attempt to create an environment in which children could trust to expose the products of their imagination, my mentor and I would never have guessed that there was at least one more highly-developed imaginary-pal relationship, let alone three more possible cases. The discovery of additional students with imaginary friends is verified by the conclusion of the study from Washington and Oregon, which concluded that more children than originally anticipated have imaginary pals and that the phenomenon of imaginary friends continues to healthily exist in second grade, and continues to exist as far up as fifth grade (Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow & Charley, 2004). The idea that some teachers have never dealt with children possessing imaginary-pal relationships is a statistic that is unsupported by current research. Furthermore, the events in my classroom are strong evidence that with the creation of an environment friendly to imaginary pals, many more students will emerge with previously undetected relationships.

Claim 2: Students understand that while they act as though imaginary friends are real, they are, in fact, unreal. Therefore, teachers do not have to worry about mixing up student concepts of fantasy versus reality.

One crucial area of concern among psychologists and educators is the discussion on whether or not children view imaginary friends as real. Understandably, we do not want to mislead students into mixing the real world with the fictional world. Through observations, interviews, and the study of one of Thomas's interesting written works, I have determined that even the most involved child with an imaginary-friend relationship is probably aware of its own fictional nature. In other words, my research provides ample evidence that second grade children understand that imaginary friends are not real.

As I have established, Both Edward and Thomas had profoundly deep and highly developed relationships with their imaginary friends. Naturally, interviewing them would yield information from which I could generalize less-developed relationships. One of the sub-wonderings to my inquiry that I sought to investigate was whether Edward and Thomas saw DinoThunder and Elmo as real or pure imaginary. In each of the interviews, both students assertively answered that they understood that imaginary pals were unreal. According to my notes in Appendix A, I directly asked Edward, "So, is DinoThunder a real character?" in response, Edward giggled and replied, "No, of course not. He is an IMAGINARY friend." When I approached the subject with Thomas later on (Appendix C), he responded by discussing the differences between an imaginary pals and regular stuffed animals. The personification of imaginary friends would have led me to believe that he saw imaginary friends as real, until he paused and stated on the side that this was all "imaginary."

In addition to yielding much information in interviews, Thomas also provided a written piece about imaginary friends that also suggested that he understood that imaginary pals were, indeed, fictional. During the last week of my research, Thomas surprised me by turning in an "all-about-book" on imaginary friends (available in Appendix F). This piece seemed to provide a lot of implicit information suggesting that a relationship with an imaginary friend would not be unlike an infatuation with a new toy. One group of sentences read as the following: "Imagine that you are playing with [the imaginary friend] then 'poof!' it's there. Then play and play and play until, 'poof!' it is gone with your pleasure and, 'poof!' it's back when you want it." Another group of sentences read as the following: "Well they don't exactly live on Earth. They live in your brain. You can 'poof' them here, you can 'poof' them there. But no [matter what], they are always there for you." These two groups of sentences seem to suggest that Thomas was in complete control over the existence of his mental creations, that the very thought of them and their existence solely depended upon his desire. Furthermore, the mention that imaginary friends live in the brain, and were not exactly existent on Earth, also suggests that Thomas could distinguish

between the reality of his physical surrounding as compared to the creativity of the unreal imagination of in his brain. Certainly, this written piece showed a lot about Thomas's views on imaginary friends. His highly developed association with imaginary pals caused him to appear as though he genuinely and truly cared for a real entity, when in reality, he was simply enjoying the magic of his imagination.

Incidentally, the research at the Universities of Washington and Oregon also noted that they would oftentimes catch themselves questioning children so intensely that their own subjects would have to stop and remind them that all of this was "pretend" (Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow & Charley, 2004).

With the documentation from interviews that both Thomas and Edward understood that imaginary pals were unreal, added to the written implication that imaginary friends were nothing more than a product of the brain, and backed up by events that occurred at the Universities of Washington and Oregon, there is a pretty strong evidence to suggest that even children with highly developed relationships are able to understand that imaginary pals are, in reality, fictional. There seems to be little to worry about in regards to the justifiable fear that encouraging imaginary pals could potentially lead a mixing up of concepts that are real and concepts that are imaginary.

Claim 3: Teacher acknowledgement and use of Imaginary Friends can help with classroom management. Therefore, teachers can use imaginary friends as a means to manage the social and academic order of the classroom.

It would be easy to understand that the acceptance of imaginary friends during the daily routines of the classroom could make educators nervous. After all, how could order be established if children were continuously distracted by their imaginary friends? Class management, therefore, would seem to become much more complicated.

During my experience inside an imaginary-pal-friendly environment, however, I found the opposite to be true. While an initial stage of novelty did lead to some distractions, I noticed through photographic and daily observations that imaginary friends only provided yet another option from which to pursue discipline and promote work ethics.

One of Edward's greatest challenges at the beginning of the year was his struggle to remain seated in his designated spot on the carpet. At one point, the situation had gotten so severe that, earlier in the first semester, his Instructional Support Team (IST) suggested that we provide Edward with a "fidget toy." A fidget toy is nothing more than an interesting object into which a child could quietly and observantly channel his or her energy from moving around the carpet. The fidget toy worked wonders starting in the month of October, and Edward's knack for moving around the carpet soon phased out. It was not for another month or two did we finally choose to remove the fidget toy altogether. When we did so, I was increasingly becoming interested in his imaginary friend. In fact, as we took away the

fidget toy, Edward began to bring DinoThunder to our meetings on the carpet. At first, I was wary of the new development. However, I was quickly put at ease when Edward soon understood that I expected DinoThunder (and occasionally DinoTiger1) to follow him as a role model. I expected DinoThunder to sit still on the carpet at a learning spot designated by Edward himself. In the instance when Edward could not control himself, especially when it came to playing with DinoThunder, I would confiscate the stuffed friend and return it back to his desk. Meanwhile, I would claim that Edward was not acting like a role model. As he understood my expectations, Edward became much more polite as a listener on the carpet with his pals. Before long, Edward was consistently bringing DinoThunder to the carpet, as well as to other classroom functions such as centers. His desire to keep DinoThunder in his presence was sufficient incentive for Edward to act appropriately. As other students emerged with imaginary pals, Edward's precedent led to the relatively easy understanding that our class allowed the use of imaginary pals as an incentive to which one would act as a role model. **Figure Claim 3A** depicts a scene in which both Edward and Student B had just placed their stuffed animals into their designated spots on the carpet during a read aloud:



Figure Claim 3A: This photograph from March 3, 2005 depicts a scene in which two students have placed their imaginary pal onto the carpet during read aloud. Imaginary pals provide a great incentive for students, who wish to have their pals present, to act appropriately during both carpet and academic times.

According to one log entry from January 23, 2005, Edward even addressed the class before a read aloud about the proper behavior for stuffed animals and imaginary friends. In fact, he reminded his peers that if they brought stuffed animals to the carpet, they would have to sit still, as if they too were on a learning spot. Edward even proceeded to demonstrate what he meant by “being good” with both of his imaginary friends, DinoThunder and DinoTiger1.

Centers time was another time in which the use of DinoThunder as a management tool had become standard practice with Edward. By proceeding in a way that was similar to the way I would at the carpet, I was able to encourage Edward to not only sit still at his seat, but also complete his work at a reasonable speed. Many times, I would respond to periods of idleness or inappropriate behavior by

simply confiscating his stuffed friends and returning them to his desk, or even just warning him of such an impending action. Most times, Edward would then straighten up and set down to diligently work on the task at hand.

Another aspect of class management, in which we enlisted the help of imaginary pals, was the ever trying task of keeping Edward's desk neat and clean. We proceeded to fix this management issue after I noticed that DinoThunder had a "home" in one of the pink materials basket. What Edward had done was, over time, cleared out some of the materials in a pocket, placed DinoThunder into it and used paper to construct a roof, window, and door. When our paraprofessional had accidentally demolished DinoThunder's home on April 4 in an effort to clean up the space around Edward's desk, Edward broke down into uncontrollable tears. In an attempt to rectify the situation, the paraprofessional offered Edward a brand new basket just for DinoThunder, if and only if he neatened his desk. I chimed in and added to the deal by asking Edward to clean his desk during recess, and also finish a story that he had not been working on. Only after that could Edward have DinoThunder's new home. Edward, enticed by the idea, whole-heartedly agreed. That afternoon, Edward stayed inside from a twenty minute recess, and cleaned out his desk. After that, he sat down and diligently completed the first page of his writing assignment (**Figure Claim 3B**). With two minutes left to spare, we gave him a purple basket to replace DinoThunder's new home (**Figure Claim 3C**, transcribed in Transcript B). Happy with it, Edward set down to work, completing one of the walls before the children returned.

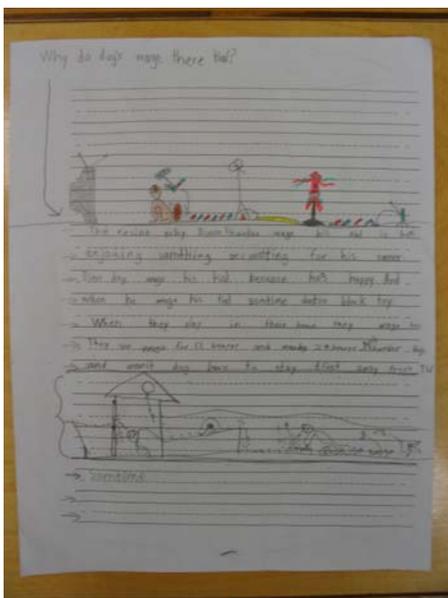


Figure Claim 3B: All of the words in this sample from April, 4 were taken after Edward had spent three minutes writing. The cause of his motivation was our promise to give him a new purple basket, from which he could construct a new home for DinoThunder (Refer to Transcript B).



Figure Claim 3C: This photograph depicts the purple basket, from which Edward began reconstructing into a home for DinoThunder (foreground). Offering the basket as an incentive spurred Edward to both clean his desk and write half a page in approximately 13 minutes.

There was an interesting side-effect to this deal with Edward. Not only was Edward able to clean his desk and write half a page in about 13 minutes, but also he was able to maintain the newfound neatness of his desk for the rest of my research (about one more month). In **Figure Claim 3D**, I photographed Edward's desk (with the purple basket home for DinoThunder on top) on April 20. Interestingly, this degree of neatness was not unlike the day, one month ago, when he had last cleaned his desk to fulfill his part of the bargain. Part of his success in keeping a clean and organized personal space was our continued reference to things that we could do to contribute to DinoThunder's new home. Granted, this might seem to have resembled a token reinforcement system. However, the importance of DinoThunder in Edward's life created this new path, which we as teachers were able to take. In fact, during our parent conference with Edward's parents on April 22, we decided to enact a deal in which Edward would be rewarded for keeping his desk and personal space organized. We offered a number of incentives from which he could select one. The options included having lunch outside with a friend, picking a toy from the prize basket, and putting chips into the party jar. At first, we did not offer any incentives for DinoThunder. But when I noticed that Edward did not seem to be excited about any of these incentives, I finally chimed in and offered to "do something for DinoThunder." Edward immediately jumped to agree. Even though my statement was vague, and neither Edward nor I had any idea what I could do for his imaginary friend, the very reference to DinoThunder piqued his interest.



Figure Claim 3D: This is a photograph of Edward's desk on April 20, one month after he had cleaned it in order to receive the purple basket for DinoThunder. His ability to keep the desk clean was partly due to our patience and allowance for DinoThunder-related incentives.

Clearly, there is a lot of incentive in using imaginary friends to promote specific aspects of classroom management. By treating Edward's DinoThunder with respect, Edward understood that the classroom rules would also apply to DinoThunder. Agreeing to that ensured that he would be a role model and take full responsibility of his pals on the carpet and at his desk. In addition, DinoThunder, as another member of the class, was also privy to positive incentives. By acknowledging that fact and the

fact that Edward would love to pamper his friend, rewarding DinoThunder for various activities (such as cleanliness) was just as good, if not better, than rewarding Edward himself.

Claim 4: Teacher acknowledgement and use of Imaginary Friends can help with language arts development, particularly in reference to writing skills. Therefore, teachers can help imaginative students improve on writing skills by using imaginary friends as a means to clarify lessons and increase motivation.

Of the various academic fields such as social studies, math, and science that were covered in school, none appeared to be as affected by imaginary friends as the language arts. Both Edward and Thomas used their imaginary friends throughout the year as they wrote both imaginative and non-fiction papers. Many times these two kids would take elements from their relationships with imaginary pals and insert them into the content of their writing. More impressive was their ability to use their imaginary friend as a resource for ideas and motivation.

As I had alluded to earlier in the report, Edward sometimes lacked the desire to sit down and write. Earlier in the year, this would have led to a teacher-student conflict that would have also left Edward tearfully defiant. Instead of writing, he would always want to draw DinoThunder. The stories that he would tell with his drawings were intricate and detailed. Although Edward claimed never to have seen a comic, his work resembled either a comic strip or storyboard. That was how I realized that drawing was Edward's form of brainstorming, and drawing DinoThunder was Edward's favorite focus. The use of DinoThunder was his way of focusing his imagination. Upon the IST's recommendation, we switched our tone, and made a deal with Edward that he could draw DinoThunder's adventures for the first five minutes of writer's workshop before having to stop and write those stories with detailed words. Edward was agreeable to this compromise. Not long after that, Edward began separating his paper into two sections, one for drawing and one for writing.

The loosening of restrictions on our part allowed Edward's imagination to roam. He was very much motivated to write about the things that occurred in his drawings. As he got the hang of splitting time between drawing and writing, we noticed that Edward was increasingly more involved in his own writing. Before the end of the first semester, Edward was writing complete stories, some samples lacking any pictures at all. Surprisingly, one sample (**Figure Claim 4D**, Transcribed in Transcript C) did not even refer to DinoThunder or his fantasy world. To get to that point, the compromise allowed us to witness a progression in Edward's writing, as depicted in **Figures Claim 4A, B, and C**.

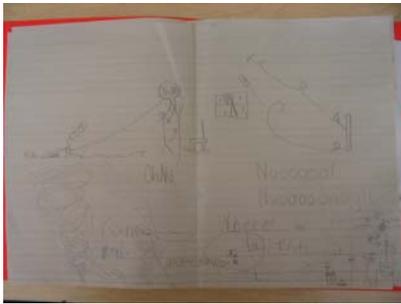


Figure Claim 4A: This sample, written in September, was typical of Edward's writing. Often times it was limited to drawings and comical depictions. For certain, it lacked writing and any form of plot or organized storyline.



Figure Claim 4B: This sample, from October, was written after we had enacted the compromise. A great improvement can be seen from his September sample. It has become more organized, with more written substance.

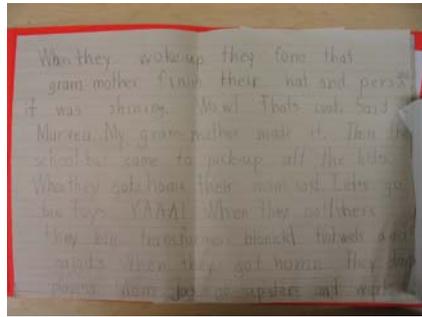


Figure Claim 4C: This sample, from the end of November, was written without any drawings of DinoThunder or his imaginary friends. While the production of examples such as these have increased ever since, we found the Edward will occasionally return to September-like styles.

Figures Claim 4A, B, and C, shown in chronological order, show a drastic improvement in the quantity of writing. Part of what contributed to the change, as I have already mentioned, was due to our compromise. Coming hand in hand with the compromise was our acknowledgement of DinoThunder. In fact, for many writing assignments, we would encourage Edward to consult DinoThunder for ideas on which he could write about. A lot of times, the result of the DinoThunder's consultation was to write a story about DinoThunder himself, or any of his other pretend friends.

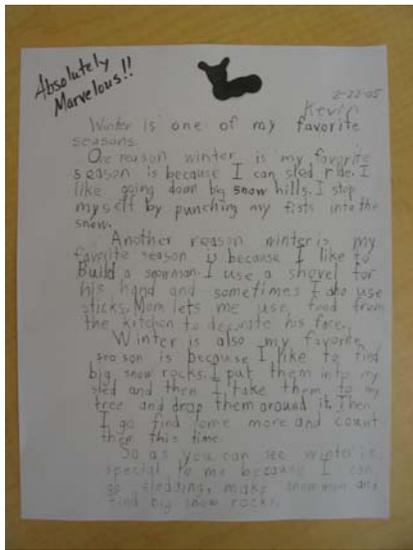


Figure Claim 4D: Completed on February 22, this writing piece was the first sample from Edward that was written without any drawings, and without any fantastical references to DinoThunder and his imaginary world (Refer to Transcript C).

As for Edward's quality of writing, I found his writing to be very descriptive. Sometimes, the development of characters seemed so involved, however, that I would get confused. This allowed for a number of teachable moments in which I was able to use what Edward wrote about DinoThunder as examples. One of the most successful mini-lessons was conducted on January 30. The lesson was about how to use quotation marks, a concept that we had not yet covered with the rest of the class. From my journal on that day, I described the following:

I had an Individual Writing Conference with Edward (DinoThunder and DinoMonkey), when I noticed that his writing, while full of dialogue, lacked quotation marks and cues telling the reader who was talking at the moment . . . I approached the situation using his favorite writing subject, DinoThunder. With Edward, we created a dialogue on a scrap piece of paper between DinoThunder and DinoTiger. I [started]:

"Where could we go for dinner?" asked DinoTiger.

Edward [responded]:

"We can go to DinoLand!" said DinoThunder.

Throughout the whole activity, Edward was visibly engaged with the dialogue. Meanwhile, he was also getting a good dose of practice making quotation marks and cues. (Observations of Edward Language Arts, Jan. 30)

Edward evidently saw this mark as a very useful tool, as he tried to paint his artistic and comical drawings into words. I helped ensure that Edward would see the lesson as building up his collection of writing tools by guiding his practice with my own imaginary dialogue with DinoThunder. Before long, Edward picked up on how quotations could be used. Ever since then, he has consistently used quotation marks in his writing. In fact, during another writing conference on February 17, I noted in my journal that Edward had effectively mastered quotation marks by placing them in all the appropriate spots in his writing. Teachable moments, of course, were not limited to writing workshop. I even wrote a sample friendly letter to DinoThunder during centers as I taught the students to write a thank you note to the organizers of a field trip. That lesson kept Edward's attention and also kept both him and DinoThunder involved.

When we entered a unit on non-fiction writing, I was (quite understandably) worried about how Edward would react. After all, there appeared to be no room for fantasy in a type of literature that dealt only with the real world. Again, as many times before, Edward proved me wrong. One of the main writing assignments from the unit was to have students write "how-to" books, writing pieces that would describe how to do something. Based on real-life applications, I feared that Edward would have no idea how to proceed. In fact, I was briefly right when Edward was stuck at first. He could not come up with a way to tie in DinoThunder. I did not encourage that he did so. However, as I discussed possible topics

to write about with a frustrated Edward, I eventually suggested writing about how to draw DinoThunder. Edward jumped at it, happy to incorporate his imaginary friend, and eventually completed the following samples shown in **Figure Claim 4E and F** (Transcribed in Transcripts D and E).

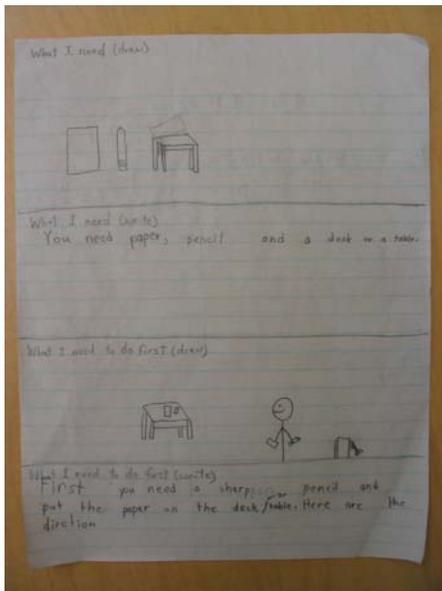


Figure Claim 4E: This is page 1 of a sample “how-to” book, completed on March 5, is a kickback to the days when Edward would draw substantially. However, his thoughts and visual brainstorming are clearly expressed (Refer to Transcript D).

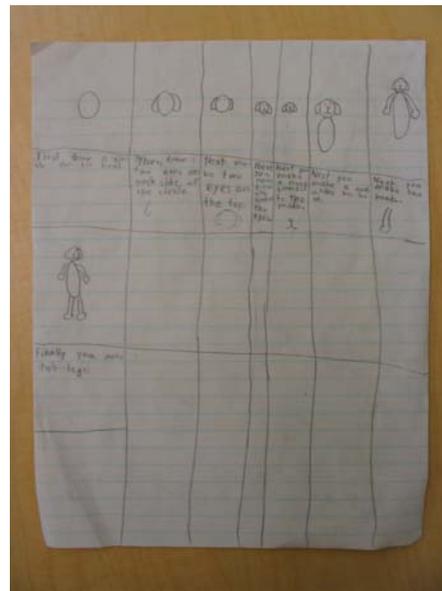


Figure Claim 4F: This is page 2 of the sample “how-to” book, completed on March 5. The topic was about how to draw DinoThunder. Here again, Edward had drawn substantially. However, his written thoughts are organized and complete (Refer to Transcript E).

Figure Claim 4E and 4F (Transcribed in Transcript D and E) are pages one and two of Edward’s how-to book. While he was, by then, comfortable with writing in paragraph form, this piece seemingly took a step backwards in his development. On closer inspection, however, Edward’s writing was clearly divided and explained. In fact, his drawings appeared to be necessary as a way for him, the author-mentor, to teach the reader through modeling.

Language arts development did not simply stop with Edward. Thomas also had trouble with finding topics to write about for the non-fiction unit’s other main assignment, writing an “all-about” book. In fact, Thomas had spent three entire days brainstorming for a topic until he decided to write all about imaginary friends. Thomas proceeded with care after I cautioned him on needing to actually write a non-fictional piece, not a fictional story. He understood, and even told me that he was going to interview some of his invisible imaginary pals. Luckily, I managed to take pictures of this interaction on April 13. Some of those pictures are depicted in **Figure Claim 4G**.

(Figure Claim 4G)



Figure Claim 4G: These six photographs (from April 13) were taken from a series of nine shots depicting Thomas as he actively interviewed three of his invisible imaginary friends. The imaginary friends would be seated on the empty blue chair. The two right-most photographs on the bottom row depicts Thomas’s reaction to an imaginary friend who jumps to the ceiling for a “yes” answer, instead of simply nodding. Allowing this experience to occur, although perhaps out of the ordinary, was crucial to promoting the motivation and language arts (writing) development of Thomas. Incidentally, the classroom was so comfortable with the idea of imaginary friends, that the surrounding children (such as the two boys reading behind him and the girl sitting at the desk across from him) were unfazed, barely glancing up at the interview before returning to their work.

Thomas was noticeably engaged with his work during and thereafter. The interview was obviously motivational. In fact, he completed his written work in two days. Meanwhile, Thomas’s classmates on that day barely paid attention to the interview in progress. That was testament to how comfortable the class felt in regards to imaginary friends. As for Thomas, this was perhaps his fastest, most thorough piece of literature. It was also complete with detail as he described the “grossest, slimiest, veinish eyeballs.” He also organized his content into three chapters in the table of content, each chapter addressing different aspects of imaginary pals.

Like Edward, Thomas had been struggling to finish work on time. Unlike Edward, Thomas’s works also lacked organization and detail. Instead of completing his work, he would build up unfinished work in his folder. If the cause of it were simply motivational, then by evidence of Thomas’s and Edward’s non-fiction writings, making an appeal to their imaginary friends would certainly help mend the problem. No doubt, Kevin was motivated to write the “how-to” book. Thomas demonstrated motivation even more strongly by not just completing his book, but also adding the organization and

detail that was sometimes symptomatic in his other pieces of work. Simultaneously, of course, the diligence that the two students demonstrated with their writing also meant that they were doing their best. In fact, Thomas wanted to have an individualized writer's conference on the very day he completed his all-about book. He wanted to know if there was anything that I liked about his writing, and anything on which he could improve upon. Such degree of motivation ties directly into language arts development.

Appealing to students' love and affection for their imaginary pals is motivating for students. Part of language arts development is the building of motivation in students to continue to read and write. In second grade, as we deal with more genres of writing, students must practice and understand the differences between each pair of genres. Imaginary pals seem to fit perfectly into the realm of language arts, they can become subjects for mini-lessons, and as students are not only motivated by them, but also challenged to figure out a way in which imaginary pals could be inserted into their writing samples in an appropriate way. By being able to fit Edward's DinoThunder or Thomas's many friends into their respective writings, I am able to know with relative certainty that these two students have thought about and understood the differences between fiction and non-fiction, as well as between how-to books and all-about books.

Areas for Further Research:

The study of imaginary friends in the field of education is very broad. While my research concentrated in the fields of social development, motivation, class management, and language arts, there is much to be studied in terms of using imaginary friends in math, science, and social studies. With some preliminary observations of Thomas, I found that talking to imaginary friends may be very helpful in getting children to slow down and think step-by-step. Logically, this could potentially be a path on which the use of imaginary pals could lead to increased success and participation in math and science.

In addition to the study of how imaginary friends might be able to affect math and science learning, I began to notice (near the end of my research) that whenever I would use imaginary friends excessively, the luster of its appeal dies away. From a motivational standpoint, I was beginning to feel that the overuse of imaginary pals, or even the use of imaginary pals without the agreement of the student, is counterproductive. In fact, both Edward and another imaginary friend, DinoMonkey, once defied my demand (on March 30) that Edward continue to write (during centers time) by both saying that the assignment for boring. Perhaps the use of imaginary friends is most productive when it is only initiated by the student. Perhaps our real job is to ensure that imaginary friends may comfortably come out into a welcoming environment whenever the student needs it. Our mention of their imaginary friends may be extremely personal, and our role may simply be to remind them that imaginary friends (if existing in a respectful way) are always there to help them out.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION: Implication To Me As An Educator

After completing my research, I do believe that there is merit to the use of imaginary friends in class. While there is no clear-cut evidence showing that imaginary friends positively affect math, science, and social studies, it is only because additional research will be needed to become definitively sure. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that imaginary friends can be a helpful tool in the fields of language arts, peer/social relationship, and classroom management.

My research verifies much of the conclusions gained from the study at the Universities of Washington and Oregon in many aspects. It too questions the validity of Piaget's assumption that few children past the age of seven have imaginary friends. Within my classroom alone, I found that there were between 2-5 possible imaginary friend relationships. That data would translate to having between 10-20% of my students exhibiting imaginary-friend indicating behavior. Many of these children were appropriately developed, not seeming to lack social skills at all. In fact, Thomas was arguably the most sociable child in the room. Certainly, the denial of these extremely personal creations of childhood imagination may have more effects on education than we realize. I have demonstrated how imaginary friends can work in certain aspects within the classroom. While further studies are being made, such as the one currently being undertaken at the Max Planck Centre in England, teachers, such as I, must be wary and mindful of the creative nature of children, and the apparently secretive existence of their creative friends. Because of that, we must understand that we may not see imaginary friends unless we search for imaginary-friend indicating behaviors and strive to create a safe environment for imagination to explicitly flourish. Surely, it is possible that some classrooms have never encountered a child with imaginary friends. However, I find it hard to believe that 75% of the classes I surveyed were unable to identify imaginary-friend relationships within. I find it hard to believe that my seemingly "normal" class could (over time) identify perhaps 5 relationships, while other classes would assume a 0% imaginary-friend existence. Teachers must search for these fantasy beings by being active in creating a proper environment. Passive observations are not enough. I, myself, stumbled upon that fact as I was unable to be simply passive in my own data collection. Before I became active, my mentor and I knew of only one relationship. After I became involved with promoting imaginary friends, I discovered 1-3 more. Teachers must understand that sometimes parents, themselves, are left in the dark when it comes to their child's imaginary friends. This was the case in the study at the University of Washington and Oregon. This was also the case in my study. In fact, my interviews with Thomas revealed that his mother had absolutely no idea that he had so many imaginary friends (Appendix C). Edward's mother, too, was

surprised by certain events to which Edward confessed (in my presence) he had also brought DinoThunder along as well (Appendix B).

We have considered, for a long time that children with imaginary friends may need psychological counseling. It has been a common belief that such children do not understand the mainstream society. Perhaps now, with my evidence along with evidence from other studies, we can understand that we have, instead, found it hard as adults to understand the thinking and creativity of children. One decade ago, the thought of having multiple children with imaginary friends was unfathomable. Today, it is an increasingly accepted concept. Teachers need to watch out for imaginary-friend indicating behaviors. Even as I wrapped up my research, I met a friend who, after hearing about my research, told me that she had an imaginary friend all the way into fourth grade. Furthermore, as I described my research to a fifth grade teacher in the district, she exclaimed that for the entire first part of the 2004-2005 school year, her class had adopted an imaginary student named Bob. As a whole, the fifth grade classroom seemed to exhibit a form of collective imaginary-friend indicating behavior. They set aside a desk for Bob, created a name tag, and even referred to Bob (albeit often jokingly) throughout the school day. In fact, the only reason for Bob's demise was because a new student arrived to take Bob's desk. Saddened, the only way the class accepted Bob's departure was when the suggestion was made that he was so smart that he had merely transferred into sixth grade!

The existence of imaginary friends in the school environment seems to resemble that of puppets. The use of puppets as an effective tool for education has been, for years, popular throughout the lower grade levels. Puppets are a product of playful imagination and educational utility, similar to a child's creation of imaginary friends. I even theorize that the mental process the children undergo in order to see these puppets as entities (separate from the puppeteer) is also related to the way children create and play with imaginary friends. Thomas's writing about imaginary pals seems to describe the creation of an imaginary friend as similar to the way we, as adult educators, would create a puppet character in the classroom.

If puppets can cause a reaction from students in the interest of further education, then I claim that the reaction of teachers to the students' imaginary friends (personal puppets) will also further education, maybe on a more personal level. At least from a one-on-one, teacher-to-student level, I have provided evidence for this notion when it comes to language arts and classroom management. We, as teachers, must first and foremost, abandon the idea that imaginary friends are bad, that they are developmentally inappropriate, and that we ought to wean the children away from them because it blurs their idea of reality versus fantasy. I even believe that Piaget contradicted his well-known theme of education through play with his idea that children must be discouraged from imaginary pals. The current trends of findings through research, including mine, seem to be more "Piagetan." In other words, the

idea that teachers and parents ought to search for and use imaginary friends for the positive development of students may actually be more in tune with Piaget's developmental themes.

Whether a teacher uses puppets or extends the creativity to include imaginary pals, education within that classroom can be enhanced by bringing in a fantastic element. Themes such as motivation (as demonstrated by my evidence for language arts), neatness and organization (as demonstrated by my observations of Edward's desk), self-control (as demonstrated by observations of Edward and DinoThunder), and creativity, (as demonstrated by almost all of the data I collected), can all be promoted by the individualized, personal nature of imaginary friends in the classroom. As a result, I do wholeheartedly advocate a change in the classroom policies that deny or stifle the blossoming of imaginary friends into policies that build a comfortable enough environment for imaginary friends to expose themselves. When a student with imaginary friends is noted, all of his or her educators should be happy to have at least one more tool to further the overall development of that particular child.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Concise Notes on the Interview with Edward on Friday, March 25, 2005

Interview with Edward
March 25, 2005 (Friday)

Summarized Findings:

- 1) DinoThunder liked to play with and chase cats when it was little.
- 2) Edward got DinoTiger1 at “around 2004 or 2005.”
- 3) DinoThunder is Edward’s favorite toy in the family.
 - “I’m going to use him as examples in my stories.”
 - Expressed desire to pose DinoThunder, perhaps with string, in order to draw him.
- 4) In the middle of the interview, Edward pauses, grabs a pair of scissors and cuts a tag on the back of DinoTiger1. “Now he doesn’t feel itchy,” explains Edward.
- 5) Asked if DinoThunder plays with other toys, Edward responds, “I think he plays with others.”
 - Using the word “think” is interesting considering the fact that Edward must be present to move DinoThunder.
 - Question: Does the use of the word, “think,” mean that Edward does believe that his imaginary friend is real?
- 6) “So, is DinoThunder a real character?”
 - Edward giggles: “No, of course not. He’s an IMAGINARY friend.”
- 7) When I asked DinoThunder is he plays with Edward’s other toys, Edward flapped his ears and explained that whenever he does that, it means that he is thinking.
 - When I asked DinoTiger1 the same question, it was also silent. However, Edward brought DinoThunder to DinoTiger1 and positioned them to touch each other’s ears. He explained “They’re whispering at each other.”
- 8) When I asked Edward if the stuffed animals like being made to stay in the classroom during lunch, Edward responded that DinoThunder was sad. “He waits and eats lunch, but [he] like to be with me.”
 - DinoTiger1, on the other hand, is happy to stay away from the cafeteria. “[He] doesn’t want to get dirty.”
- 9) Edward described the idea that DinoThunder speaks its own language, DinoLanguage. He then proceeded to explain that “I pretend I don’t know.”
- 10) Favorite subjects in school:
 - DinoThunder: Free Play
 - DinoTiger1: Drawing
 - Edward: Math
- 11) When asked if DinoThunder had ever gotten into trouble, Edward replied that he had. For spying on him, Edward has both DinoTiger1 and DinoThunder grounded until college.
 - Interesting punishment: “[They] can’t spy until college”
- 12) Asked about other pastimes of DinoThunder and DinoTiger1, Edward responded by saying that the two “like to play stone.”
 - Stone is when one stuffed animal pretends to be a stone and allows the other stuffed animal to roll him around.

Appendix B: Concise Notes On the Interview with Edward and his mother on Monday, March 28, 2005

Interview With Edward and Edward’s Mother
March 28, 2005 (Monday)

At 7:30pm, Edward and his mother showed up at Ferguson Township Elementary School. At first, I was uneasy about having Edward present. However, I soon learned that he comfortably offered tremendous insight into his own life. In fact, he even brought DinoThunder and a Pokemon book to the meeting.

- 1) When I described my research to Edward’s mother, she seemed very happy to support me in any way possible. She also agrees with my idea that encouraging stuffed animals and creating a welcoming environment for such imaginary pals may have benefits to academic and social growth.

- 2) During our chit-chat at the beginning of the meeting, Edward's mother mentioned about how much improvement she has seen from Edward's academic and social behaviors. I responded as honestly as possible, attributing most of it to maturity, but also saying that perhaps the open environment we had created for the imaginary pal may have had some effect as well.
- 3) Mother began by saying that every night, Edward collects a lot of his stuffed friends to bed.
- 4) When asked about DinoThunder's role in Edward's life, the mother responded that he was not allowed to go near electronic appliances, such as the computer.
 - This was due to DinoThunder's magnet paws.
- 5) Mother also claims that DinoThunder helps Edward when he is playing the piano.
 - "[He] put it on top of the piano."
 - "It help him to relax."
 - Mother has even observed Edward communicate and talk to DinoThunder when nervous.
 - This is a trend that the mother has consistently noticed especially during performances, situations where he would need to meet new people.
- 6) Mother also claims that DinoThunder has also helped Edward with his empathy.
 - "[It] helps him to be more caring."
 - Says that Edward used to be a lot more self-centered, and therefore, very demanding.
- 7) Surprisingly, Edward's mother said that DinoThunder is fairly new. It was purchased in Taiwan at around the beginning of second grade. Edward's heavy use of his stuffed animal caused it to wear and tear.
- 8) The issue of Taiwan lead us into a side-topic conversation about whether or not Edward likes to bring his imaginary pals on trips.
 - Edward's mother responded by saying that he used to always bring his favorite stuffed animal. However, she did not notice that Edward brought anything during their last trip to Philadelphia, saying, "Last trip he didn't bring it."
 - Edward stopped his mother and said, "I brought him in my bag, but I didn't bring him out."
- 9) Nonetheless, Edward's mother believes that he is slowly moving away from DinoThunder. This was something that I had also begun to feel as well.
- 10) Edward's mother also believes that DinoThunder also helps Edward to become more creative.
 - She compared DinoThunder with his newer interests such as the Bionicles and Transformers, say that the newer toys made him more limited, but more realistic, especially in his art.
 - DinoThunder used to play various roles in Edward's many drawings. But now, Bionicles and Transformers only lead Edward to draw realistic renditions of each toy.
 - Edward's mother's claim was verified by Edward who also said that, "I think I started being creative when I got DinoThunder."
 - Edward also talked about how he most liked using DinoThunder in stories.
- 11) Later on, we led into another issue over which I was curious: Did DinoThunder develop any friendships with his classmates' imaginary pals?
 - Edward said that all the imaginary pals are friends, even though they don't really communicate and play.
 - When asked to pinpoint other children with imaginary pals, Edward singled out [Student 1] (George the Lion), Thomas (Bunny, Elmo, etc . . .), [Student 2] (Dog), and [Student 3] (Dog).
 - Interesting, these students are all males
- 12) We soon returned to talking about Edward's home life.
- 13) Edward's mother also claimed that by listening to his interactions with DinoThunder, she is able to tell what is happening in school.
 - Typically, when asked about school, Edward would give simple replies, such as "fine."
 - However, Edward's mother is much more able to collect more information by listening to Edward talk to DinoThunder. Sometimes he will reference back to events in school. Other times, he will recreate a version of an event at school or elsewhere in his life.
 - For example: In first grade, there was a younger kid who was taller than Edward. This used to always bother Edward. As a result, Edward created an imaginary younger brother for DinoThunder who, coincidentally (?), was also taller than DinoThunder.
- 14) The discussion led to how Edward ordinarily acts at home. Edward's mother said that during meals, Edward used to feed DinoThunder, even going so far as to set plates up.
 - Edward verified that this was true, although he claims that he doesn't do it anymore. In fact, "now he packs his own breakfast, lunch, and dinner."
- 15) Disciplinary Issues: Edward's mother has also used DinoThunder as a tool to discipline her son.
 - For minor infractions, she would warn Edward by punishing DinoThunder (to timeout) as an accomplice. She referred to a Chinese parable about a dog who wouldn't do tricks so the master pretended to train a chicken, who obviously would not listen. In the end, the master beheads the chicken in front of the dog, who in turn, quickly learned all the new tricks.
 - Serious infractions, however, include times when Edward would attempt to blame DinoThunder. When that is the case, Edward would be disciplined, while the mother explained that whatever DinoThunder does must be put in action by Edward.

- 16) As an interesting sidenote, both of us noticed that Edward likes to use DinoThunder to push the limits and test authority. I notice this especially when I am conducting a writer’s workshop and Edward does not feel like writing.
- When I would try to redirect the energy into DinoThunder, Edward would claim that DinoThunder was tired as well.

Appendix C: Concise Notes On the Interview with Thomas on Tuesday, April 19, 2005

Interview with Thomas

This interview was conducted on the morning of April 19. Thomas had brought one of his imaginary pals, Elmo, out into the hallway where he answered many questions about the role of imaginary friends in his life.

- 1) Asked if Thomas had other imaginary friends aside from Elmo: “Oh yeah, a bunch!”
- 2) When Elmo was questioned about where he lived, Elmo took on an animated role in his response: “I sometimes live in my colored house. I live with my dad [gestures to Thomas] . . . and I love to eat chicken, chicken nuggets, and chicken patty.”
- 3) Asked if Elmo liked to come to school, Thomas replied that Elmo likes to come to school, but he had his own school to go to most of the time “in imaginary world.”
 - Thomas said that Elmo liked to help Chris with math and spelling.
- 4) On whether or not the classroom was imaginary-friend-friendly enough: “Well, it’s in the middle.” Thomas failed to explain why.
- 5) Thomas pinpointed Student 1 and Student 2 as involved in other possible imaginary pal relationships.
- 6) **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMAGINARY FRIENDS AND STUFFED ANIMALS:** “There is a difference between imaginary friends and stuffed animals. Well, if something is a stuffed animal it just lays there [Thomas throws Elmo onto the table]. It doesn’t talk and it doesn’t move. An imaginary friend though, you can talk to it.”
 - Later on, he paused and said on the side that of course this was all “imaginary.”
- 7) How can imaginary pals help?
 - Thomas: “Elmo can help me sound out words. Imaginary friends can also set up [math] problems.
 - Edward (from later in the day): “DinoThunder can help me find clues to make you think.” – in reference to work problems and math.
- 8) Impromptu test with Imaginary pal:
 - Without Elmo, I asked Thomas to use manipulatives to solve the borrowing problem of 32-3: Thomas struggled, first coming up with 27 as he neglected to add the 2 from 32 with the 10 that had been carried over. At that moment, I asked Elmo to help out. As Thomas explained what he did, he began to realize that it made no sense to leave out the 2 from the 32 during the borrowing.

Appendix D:

The following Table demonstrates the similarities and differences between Edward and two of imaginary friends. Such differences in character likes and dislikes led me to initially question whether or not Edward believe that his friends were real, complete with independent identities.

	DinoThunder	DinoTiger1	Edward
Physical Description of Toy	Small stuffed animal, shaped like a brown dog.	Small stuffed animal, shaped like a tiger.	Second Grade, Asian, glasses, physically small in relations with peers
“Favorite” Subject in School	“Free Play” or recess	Drawing	Math
“Feelings” About No Longer Being Allowed To Go To The Cafeteria For Lunch	“Sad, he waits to eat lunch, but he like to be with me.”	Fine: “He doesn’t want to get dirty.”	Respectful of DinoThunder’s feelings. OK with DinoTiger1.
Language	DinoLanguage, “I pretend I don’t know [it].”	English	English and Chinese

Appendix E: Summarization of Statistics Gathered From the Survey of State College First and Second Grade Teachers

Of the 10 second grade teachers, 1 split (first/second grade), and 1 first grade teacher that responded to my survey:

- **3 teachers**, including my mentor, accounted for a total of **5 students** with imaginary pals who “consistently (more than 2 times a week) communicate with an imaginary pal (the imaginary pal may be either visible/physical or invisible)
 - Note: Since the survey, my class has discovered at least one more highly developed student-imaginary friend relationships as well as at least three more possible relationships.
 - Note 2: Since the survey, another classroom discovered another imaginary friend.
 - Note3: Since the survey, we have accounted for approximately five more imaginary pals.
- **All 3 teachers, who accounted for imaginary pal relationships**, stated that those children and their imaginary pals were welcomed into various peer groups, and that the class simply does not care or mind such imagination.
- **7 teachers (with four more leaving the question blank)** were unsure whether or not their students understood that imaginary friends were not real, even if they did act as though they were.
 - Note: Only one teacher (first grade) responded by saying she knew that her students knew that imaginary pals were unreal.
 - Note: Since the survey, my class has discovered that our students also understood that imaginary pals were unreal.
- **1 teacher** used her former imaginary friend as a puppet within her classroom.
 - Note: My mentor also uses puppets to help out with lessons within the classroom.
- **2 teachers** have, or would have, a policy that students could not be disruptive with their pals and that they may only play with them during lunch and/or recess.
- **5 teachers** have, or would have, a policy that students could not be disruptive with their pals, but they may coexist with the class. Physical pals may even have a designated “seat,” and all pals have a code of behavior management.
- **8 teachers** have a favorable opinion regarding the belief that the explicit use of imaginary pals in the classroom might be beneficial to the development of second graders.
 - Note: **3 of these teachers** were unsure about whether or not there were benefits, but did decided to mention possible benefits in specific developmental areas later on in the survey.
- The following table shows how many respondents felt that there could be possible benefits to specific developmental areas if imaginary friends were explicitly used in class.

Areas of Second Grade Development	Number of Teachers (out of 12) that believe that the explicit use of imaginary pals in the classroom will benefit the developmental area.
Math	4
Science	4
Reading	4
Writing	5
Research	2
Social Studies	4
Peer/Social Relationships	8
Others	2 * - (favorable to all fields of education)

Appendix F: Re-Typed Version of Thomas's "All-About-Book" On Imaginary Friends

Assignment: [All-About] Imaginary Friends (April 21, 2005)

Table of Content:

- 1) How to get one
- 2) What They Eat
- 3) Where they live

How to Get one: Chapter 1

You must think of what you want it to look like. Then name it and then make sure everything is ok with he or she. Then imagine that you are playing with it then "poof!" it's there. Then play and play and play until, "poof!" it is gone with your pleasure and, "poof!" it's back when you want it.

What They Eat: Chapter 2

They eat almost anything like watermelon seeds, cantaloupe peels, green ketchup, metal, chicken nuggets, steak, hamburgers, cheesy macaroni, and chocolate pudding. They have 6 stomachs to digest. Each digests one of what it eats. The most grossest thing is something they eat. They eat a human body part [that is a] slimey gross vein-ish eyeball.

Where They Live: Chapter 3

Well they don't exactly live on Earth. They live in your brain. You can "poof" them here, you can "poof" them there. But no [matter what], they are always there for you.

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript A: Figure Sample A: How the Unicorn Got Its Horn, Page 1, March, 2005

Onec [Once] upon a time there live a mother unicorn and a father unicorn. They live in unicorn land in dino dan land. One day a new baby was bonde [born] from his mother. It had four little feet and one little head but it dosi'nt [doesn't] have a unicorn horn. So they wate [wait] and wate [wait] about a year.

Transcript B: Figure Claim 3B: Why Do Dogs Wage [Wag] There [Their] Tial [Tail]? Page 1, April 4, 2005

The resine [reason] why Dino Thunder wage [wags] his tial [tail] is he's enjouing [enjoying] something [something] or waiting for his owner. Dino dog wage [wags] his tial because he's happy. And when he wage [wags] his tial sometime [sometimes] dastou (?) black toy. When they play in their home they wage [wag] too. They can wage [wag] for 12 hourer [hours] and maybe 24 hourer [hours]. And thunder dogs and monit (?) dog have to stay 4 feet away from TV.

Transcript C: Figure Claim 4D: Feb. 22, 2005

Winter is one of my favorite seasons.

One reason winter is my favorite season is because I can sled ride. I like going down big snow hills. I stop myself by punching my fists into the snow.

Another reason winter is my favorite season is because I like to Build a snowman. I use a shovel for his hand and sometimes I also use sticks. Mom lets me use food from the kitchen to decorate his face.

Winter is also my favorite season is because I like to find big snow rocks. I put them into my sled and then I take them to my tree and drop them around it. Then I go find some more and count them this time.

So as you can see winter is special to me because I can go sledding, make snowmen and find big snow rocks.

Transcript D: Figure Claim 4E: How To Draw DinoThunder, Page 1, March 5, 2005

What I need (draw)

What I need (write)

You need paper, pencil and a desk or a table.

What I need to do first (draw)

What I need to do first (write)

First you need a sharp pencil and put the paper on the desk /or table. Here are the direction [directions].

Transcript E: Figure Claim 4F: How To Draw DinoThunder, Page 2, March 5, 2005

- 1) First draw a circle for his head.
- 2) Then draw two ears on each side of the circle.
- 3) Next make two eyes on the top.
- 4) Next you make a mouth under the eyes.
- 5) Next you make a nose connect [connected] to the mouth.
- 6) Next you make a oval under his head
- 7) Next you make two hands.
- 8) Finally you make legs.

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