

# Paper-7

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Creativity in Teaching Reading to the Third Graders of Elementary School  
by Dr. Suhartono, M.Pd.<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:**

Creativity, as part of learning and innovation skills, is important skill in Asean economic society (AES) and globalization era. Because of important, creativity is taught in school, including elementary school, to make students can imagine and create the new world, coping well everything with unknown territory, making choices, etc.

Based on that, this paper is oriented to describe how does creativity is taught in reading materials. By using two texts in reading skill materials from theme 1 of third grade of elementary school's book entitled *Buku Tematik Terintegrasi Berbasis Kurikulum 2013* (Integrated Thematic Book-Curriculum 2013 Based), the result of the study shows that creativity is taught as reflected in some questions, but not all of questions reflect creativity.

## 1. Introduction

Creativity, as part of learning and innovation skills, is important skill in Asean economic society (AES) and globalization era. According to Norman et al. (2006:i), creativity is important because it becomes a base to imagine and to create the new world. Because of important, creativity is taught in school, including elementary school.

In elementary school, teaching creativity can be identified from multi-aspects. In reading material, for example, teaching creativity can be identified from construction of questions to check students' reading comprehension.

Based on the explanations, this paper focuses on the implementation of teaching creativity to third graders of elementary school. To give opportunity to another focus, area and data of this paper are limited: two of reading skill materials from theme 1 of third grade of elementary school's book entitled *Buku Tematik Terintegrasi Berbasis Kurikulum 2013* (Integrated Thematic Book-Curriculum 2013 Based). That book is published by *Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture [2015]). Description of the data and its explanation can be effectively used to extend similar study, such as *Creativity in Schools* (Craft, 2006:14—28), *Students' Experiences of Creativity* (Oliver et al., 2006:43—58), and *Developing Students' Creativity: Searching for An Appropriate Pedagogy* (Jackson and Sinclair, 2006:118—141).

## 2. Creativity

### 2.1 Concept and Feature of Creativity

Creativity is abstract thing. It causes some experts have different view when defining the concept of creativity. However, they have the same points that creativity covers the term such as original or authenticity, genuine risk-taking, initiative, and problem-solving ability. Oliver et al. (2006:43—58) mentioned that creativity is typically described using ideas such as freedom from routine (not being bound by conventions, schedules, or expectations), an expression of imagination (this is often associated with the idea of creativity as personal; it is also used to describe things that were done or invented “in the head”), personal (something that can only be created by that person [creativity is subjective]), independence (it is associated with an escape from social conventions, rules or forms, and primarily an act of individuals), risk (something felt to be “synonymous” with being creative), superficiality (not always in a negative sense, this conception is primarily concerned with being free from

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having to justify decisions or creations), commonplace (this suggests that everyone is creative), infectious (something that can be caught by being with others (teachers or students), incremental (this relatively common conception recognised a limit on creativity, suggesting that small improvements rather than a radical break with tradition are what should be expected), original (the sense that creativity was something more than just repetition), radical (the belief that something creative should be entirely new and original, being unique or “groundbreaking”, but certainly not “obvious”). In line with Oliver et al., Jackson and Sinclair (2006:118—141) stated that creativity can be identified by these features: being imaginative, generating new ideas, thinking out of the boxes, looking beyond the obvious, and seeing the world in different; being original (this embodies the quality of newness and the idea of significance); exploring, experimenting, and taking risks; skills in critical thinking and synthesis; communicative; high tolerance for complexity, disorganisation, and the messiness of life; ability in problem finding and discovery modes of being; mental mobility and ability to change perspectives; willingness to take risks and the ability to accept and learn from mistakes; skill in critical thinking, enabling ideas to be evaluated; and strong self-motivation and self-determination to accomplish goals. Based on Fryer’s research about perceptions of creativity, result of the research showed that the features of creativity have different grade or rank like below: imagination (90%), seeing unusual connections (86.7%), combining ideas (80%), original ideas (80%), innovation (76.7%), thinking processes (72.2%), discovery (66.7%), invention (61.1%), generative thinking (53.3%), self-expression (52.2%), valuable ideas (52.2%), sudden inspiration (51.1%), analytical thinking (44.4%), awareness of beauty (25.6%), aesthetic products (21.1%), unconscious activities (21.1%), tangible products (18.9%), mysterious processes (14.4), and other (14.3) (Fryer, 2006:74—88).

## 2.2 Developing Creativity in schools

In AES and globalization era, everything is in term of competition. To be winner in the competition, creativity has a main role. It is in line with Craft (2006:14—28) statement that creativity is very important because surviving and thriving in the twenty-first century require a sort of “personal effectiveness” in coping well with unknown territory and in recognising and making choices.

Because of very important, creativity is taught in school. The main aim of teaching creativity in school, as mention by Craft (2006:14—28), is to give students many choices and a great deal of control over what and how they explore. Approach of the teaching is called learner inclusif approach. According to experts’ statements (Craft, 2006:14—28), to apply the approach, teachers are suggested to use student centered learning by doing some or all of the following activities:

- (1) develops children’s motivation to be creative
- (2) encourages the development of purposeful outcomes across the curriculum
- (3) fosters the study of any discipline in depth, developing children’s knowledge of it, to enable them to go beyond their own immediate experiences and observations
- (4) uses language to both stimulate and assess imaginativeness
- (5) offers a clear curriculum and time structure to children but involves them in the creation of new routines when appropriate reflecting on genuine alternatives
- (6) provides an environment where children can go beyond what is expected and are rewarded for doing so
- (7) helps children to find personal relevance in learning activities
- (8) models the existence of alternatives in the way information is imparted, whilst also helping children to learn about and understand existing conventions

- (9) encourages children to explore alternative ways of being and doing, celebrating where appropriate their courage to be different
- (10) gives children enough time to incubate their ideas!

Some of the activities are similar to Oliver's et al. statements that creativity can be developed in school by some approaches below:

- (1) stimuli for imaginative thinking or heuristic strategies, e.g. "problem-based learning" and "games which set challenging problems (encouraging) students to think of new approaches"
- (2) learning in a particular context or providing a context for creative work, e.g. "(using) real life scenarios to encourage the adaptation of radiographic technique" and "showing examples of creative thinking and solutions; providing reading and resources to extend thinking"
- (3) supportive factors such as the relationship between tutor and students, e.g. "strong encouragement with a friendly approach" and "trying to remain open to unexpected responses"
- (4) personality characteristics e.g. "helping students develop an approach to risk-taking" and "(building) self confidence"
- (5) teaching skills for use in creative work e.g. "first developing the craft skills; then when they're established, encouraging them to play, confident that they can recover if it goes wrong" and "working on students' strengths whilst improving their weaknesses"
- (6) setting tasks which require creativity e.g. "developing opportunities for creativity processes, solutions, journeys and application – briefs, seminars, essays, presentations." And "setting creativity tasks and being as open as I can be"
- (7) developing students' motivation e.g. "empower students so they feel they can have ownership and contribute usefully to discussions and debates" and "a person-centred approach to teaching, tapping into each individual's dreams, needs, aspirations, curiosity and motivation" (Oliver et al., 2006:43—58).

By using "strategy" as a term to describe what Craft meant by "activity" and Oliver et al. meant by "approach", Jackson and Sinclair (2006:118—132) mention that creativity can be developed by the following assumption-led strategy.

- (1) Teacher encourages the acquisition of domain-specific knowledge and skills. Students cannot be creative in a domain if they are not knowledgeable about the domain and/or if they don't care enough about the domain to want to achieve within it.
- (2) Teacher develop their own understandings about what it means in the contexts for their teaching. Through such understanding they can be clearer about the types of creativity they want to encourage.
- (3) Teacher reveal their own creativity and show students what it means to them in their own practice appreciating that this may be easier said than done.
- (4) Teacher articulate and construct their own meanings of creativity for the contexts in which the students are studying and learning. It is these perceptions that shape their beliefs and fuel their intrinsic motivations – widening the range of perceptions is perhaps the most important thing teacher can do to develop students' creativity.
- (5) Teacher give students opportunities to experience and practise their creativity by creating the curriculum spaces, conditions and experiences that are stimulating, relevant and authentic to their field of study. Challenging problem-working contexts provide favourable environments for practising to be creative.
- (6) Teacher develop a repertoire of thinking skills that might help students to think freshly about the things that they have to give attention to.

- (7) Teacher facilitate students to recognise and capture their own creativities and help them make claims that can be substantiated. They have to be critical evaluators of their own creativity as it is manifested in the learning enterprises in which they are engaged.

Some activities, approaches, and strategies above are very good to apply because creativity principally is dynamic competency and help students in the future. That is in line with the result of international research focussed on creativity that 92.2% subjects believe that creativity can be developed, over 80% subjects think the capacity to be creative helps people to be successful, and 86% subjects believe this prepares students for the wider world (Oliver et. al., 2006:43—58).

### **2.3 Assessing Creativity**

Creativity can be assessed by several ways. According to Oliver et al. (2006:43—58), teacher can assess students creativity by using exams and essay. However, they note that essay is better because offering greater opportunity for personal expression. Oliver et al. (2006:43—58) also explain that there are two broad reasons why exams are seen as a problem. The first relates back to one of the conceptions of creativity, in that such scheduled assessments were seen as being at odds with being struck by inspiration. The second reason concerned forms of assessment. Students do not suggest that their work should not or could not be assessed, but they do express the opinion that alternative forms of assessment would be more appropriate.

Different from Oliver et al., Cowan (2006:163—165) explain that teacher can assess their students' creativity by the process and product. When teacher assess creativity by the process, they simply usually ask a question which calls for the knowledge concerned to be given in the answer. Teacher usually judge understanding by asking a question that calls for a response which explains or rewords that which the students knows and claims to understand. Teacher usually assess the ability to apply understanding by getting the students to apply the particular understanding in question, and to leave a trail, in one form or another, which shows how they have been tackling the applying, and how that led them to the end product of that application.

In assessing creativity by the process, teacher usually also use analysis, which is rather more difficult to assess—but only slightly so. Analysis in this context tends to follow a fairly definite process. This approach, even if not explicit in the record of the analysing, is capable of being described by the students as “their method”, for they should know what they were doing and how they do it.

All of manners or ways actually are not enough to apply assessing students' creativity. Wh<sup>3</sup> To answer the question, Cowan (2006:164) explain that they are not enough because the process is highly personal, it varies from challenge to challenge, and often has at its heart a flash of inspiration which is extremely difficult for the creative problem solver to capture for themselves.

Different from by the process, in assessing students' creativity by the product teacher usually use students' product of their efforts. Teacher usually make a fair stab at assessing students' ability to analyse from the evidence of the final analysis that they produce and present. That is also not enough to assess students' creativity because the creative process often takes place without much recorded evidence of what was going on in the creator's head, and with what *is* available being ambiguous and perhaps misleading. Beside, product may be interfered or influenced by previous product so not pure original.

### **3. Teaching Reading**

21 Reading, as one of four language skills, is taught in school. Generally, focus of teaching reading is comprehension (reading comprehension). In teaching reading comprehension, according to Brown (2001:306), teacher can use strategies below: (1) identifying the purpose in reading, (2) using graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding, (3) using efficient silent reading techniques to relatively rapid comprehension, (4) skimming the text for main ideas, (5) scanning the text for specific information, (6) using semantic mapping or clustering, (7) guessing when do not cer 11, (8) analyzing vocabulary, (9) distinguishing between literal and implied meanings, and (10) capitalizing on discourse markers to process relationship.

Brown (2001:312) also explain about tipe of reading. Based on the existence 12 reader's voice, reading consists of oral and silent r 11 ing. Silent reading is classified into intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading can be divided into two categories, namely linguistic and content reading. Different from intensive reading, extensive reading consists of skimming, scanning, and global reading.

#### 4. Creativity in Teaching Reading to Third Graders of Elementary School

As mentioned in point 1 (Introduction), there are two reading texts in this paper. The first text entitled To Maintain A Cat and the second one is My White Jasmine. The two texts are displayed below.

##### Text 1

##### Memelihara Kucing (Taking Care of A Cat)

Hari ini Siti senang sekali.

(Siti is very happy today.)

Kucing peliharaan Siti melahirkan 5 anak kucing yang lucu.

(Her cat is delivering five cute kittens.)

Anak kucing yang dilahirkan memiliki warna yang berbeda.

10 they have different colours.)

Tiga anak kucing berwarna putih seperti induknya.

10 hree of them are white, like their mother.)

Satu anak kucing berwarna hitam.

(One is black.)

Satu anak kucing lainnya berwarna belang.

(The other one is stripes)

Siti senang memelihara kucing karena kucing termasuk hewan yang pintar.

20 i loves to take care of cats because they are smart animals.)

Siti menyiapkan tempat tinggal kucing dan menjaga kebersihannya.

(Siti prepares a space for the cat and keeps it clean.

Setiap hari Siti memberikan makan, minum, dan memandikannya secara teratur.

(Siti feeds and bathes them regularly)

Siti menyayangi dan memelihara hewan peliharaannya.

(Siti loves and takes care of her pets.)

Siti juga tidak meninggalkan kewajiban lainnya

(Siti also does a lot of things for them.)

Pertanyaan:

(Questions)

1. Mengapa Siti merasa senang?

(Why is Siti happy?)

2. Bagaimana cara kucing berkembang biak?  
(How do cats breed?)
  3. Berapa banyak anak kucing milik Siti?  
(How many kittens does Siti have?)
  4. Ada berapa jenis warna anak kucing?  
(How many colours are the kittens?)
  5. Apakah kamu suka memelihara kucing?  
(Do you like taking care of cats?)
  6. Apakah kamu memiliki hewan peliharaan di rumah?  
(Do you have pets at home?)
  7. Tahukah kamu cara merawatnya?  
(Do you know how to take care of them?)
- (Source: Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015:14—16)

Text 2

*Melati Putihku*  
(My White Jasmine)

*Walaupun kulitmu tak seputih melati*  
(Though your complexion is not as white as a jasmine)  
*Walaupun tubuhmu tak semungil melati*  
(Though your body is not as cute as a jasmine)  
*Namun hatimu seindah melati*  
(Yet your heart is as pretty as a jasmine)  
*Tutur katamu pun halus seanggun melati*  
(Your words are grace as well)

*Pertanyaan*  
(Questions)

1. Apa pesan yang ingin disampaikan penulis puisi?  
(What is the message of the poem?)
  2. Menurutmu, mengapa penulis puisi menggunakan bunga melati untuk menggambarkan perasaannya?  
(Why does the writer use jasmine to describe his feeling?)
- (Source: Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015:116)

Text 1 can be analyzed like below.

Question	Making Creativity	Explanation
1. Why is Siti happy?	No	The answer is explicit.
2. How do cats breed?	Yes	The answer is implicit and it makes students to make inference.
3. How many kittens does Siti have?	No	The answer is explicit.
4. How many colours are the kittens?	No	The answer is explicit.
5. Do you like taking care of cats?	No	The answer is irrelevant with the text.
6. Do you have pets at home?	No	The answer is irrelevant with the text.
7. Do you know how to take care of them?	No	The answer is irrelevant with the text.

In line with text 1, text 2 can be analyzed like below.

Question	Making Creativity	Explanation
1. What is the message of the poem?	Yes	The answer is implicit and it makes students to make inference.
2. Why does the writer use jasmine to describe his feeling?	Yes	The answer is implicit and it makes students to make inference.

## 5. Conclusion

Creativity is very important to teach. By having creativity, students can imagine and create the new world, coping well everything with unknown territory, making choices, etc.

In teaching reading to third <sup>17</sup> graders of elementary school, creativity can be identified from the construction of questions. Related to that, the result of the study in this paper show creativity is taught as reflected in some questions. However, not all of questions reflect creativity.

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