

STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES IN INTEGRATED THEMATIC TEXTBOOKS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TO MEET 21st CENTURY SKILLS

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ABSTRAK

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apa saja aktivitas keterampilan siswa pada buku teks tematik terpadu jenjang SD yang dibutuhkan pada abad 21 saat ini. Buku teks tematik terpadu yang diteliti berjudul *Bumiku* dan *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* untuk kelas enam yang diterbitkan oleh Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI tahun 2018 sesuai dengan Kurikulum 2013. Metode penelitian ini adalah deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Kriteria yang digunakan dalam menganalisis aktivitas keterampilan siswa pada buku ini mengadaptasi kriteria *Partnership for 21st century skills* yaitu *critical thinking and problem solving skills*, *communication skill*, *collaboration skill*, dan *creativity and innovation skills*. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa aktivitas keterampilan siswa yang dominan muncul pada kedua buku ini berdasarkan kriteria tersebut adalah memunculkan ide dan membuat kesimpulan untuk mendorong siswa memiliki *critical thinking and problem solving skills*, saling berdiskusi untuk mendorong siswa memiliki *communication skill*, bekerjasama dalam kelompok untuk mendorong siswa memiliki *collaboration skill*, serta membuat hasil karya sendiri secara kreatif untuk mendorong siswa memiliki *creativity and innovation skills*. Berdasarkan hasil analisis ini, buku teks tematik terpadu untuk jenjang SD diharapkan dapat memberikan variasi aktivitas keterampilan abad 21 lebih banyak sebagai bekal mempersiapkan siswa dari jenjang dasar untuk bersaing di era globalisasi pada masa yang akan datang.

Abstract: The aim of this research was to know what kind of skills in the today's 21st century were promoted by integrated thematic textbooks for primary school. Two integrated thematic textbooks have been investigated. They were *Bumiku* and *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* for the sixth grade of primary school published by the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture following 2013 Curriculum. The research was descriptive with a qualitative approach. The criteria for century skills used to analyze the content of those textbooks were adapted from the *Partnership for 21st century skills*. They were *critical thinking and problem solving skills*, *communication skill*, *collaboration skill*, as well as *creativity and innovation skills*. The result of the analysis showed that the dominant student activities occurring in these textbooks were generating idea and making inference activities to promote critical thinking and problem solving skills, discussing activity to promote communication skill, working in group to promote collaboration skill, and creating product creatively to promote students' creativity and innovation skills. It was expected that the activities on integrated thematic textbooks would further enhance the skills of primary school students in the 21st century as the first step at the level of education preparing them along with future globalization.



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A. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of globalization era has become the most important thing that the teacher should consider. In the field of education, preparing students to engage in 21st century skills to adapt to

global change around the world is likely to be implemented in each of instructional components, such as the curriculum, the goal of teaching and learning process, the teacher, the student, the learning material, the learning method, the learning

media, and the evaluation. These should be determined by the educational policy makers of each country incorporating with the need of having 21st century skills. Teachers as one of the key instructional component acting as the classroom manager play an important role in the theoretical and practical application of learning material to students who are compatible with 21st century skills.

The environment today stands up to the rapid development of science, knowledge, and technology. The consequence of this situation requires the students to prepare for 21st century skills. Educational actors need to think about what the students need to be successful in a world in which digital technologies are keys for learning. Living in today's 21st century skills that rely heavily on digital issues, students should have special skills to cope with this situation. Alismail and McGuire (2015) and Abdullah (2016) point out that the framework of 21st century skills for education is being prepared by the Partnership for 21st century skills. They propose the integration of academic knowledge, critical thinking, and social skills in teaching and learning to help students master required abilities in the 21st century. There are four relevant skills in preparing students for the 21st century as adapted from Abdullah (2016). They are described as follows:

1. *Critical Thinking and Problem Solving*

This skill tries to clarify the evidence, arguments, claims, and beliefs about something. Meanwhile, problem solving skill focuses on solving the non-familiar cases and problems with particular matters. The examples of students' activities in textbooks indicating these skills are categorizing, comparing and contrasting, classifying, predicting, drawing conclusion, relating, generating ideas, and making inferences.

2. *Communication*

This skill tries to train students having ability to enlarge their ideas orally and written in particular forms and contexts. The examples of students' activities in textbooks indicating this skill are communicating, presenting orally, summarizing, and discussing.

3. *Collaboration*

This skill tries to train students working in a group with respecting and sharing ideas. The examples of students' activities in textbooks

indicating this skill are working in a group and working with different communities.

4. *Creativity and Innovation*

This skill tries to train students in developing a wide range of idea creation techniques to create new and worthwhile ideas. The examples of students' activities in textbooks indicating this skill are making the simulation and creating products creatively.

Discussing the four relevant skills needed in the 21st century above, we can conclude on one important point to consider. Following the developed science and technology in the global era, the students have to be prepared to be critical thinkers, collaborators, and creators (Abdullah, 2016). The government as the national curriculum designer in such a country plays a significant role in preparing the young generation to develop the 21st century skills since they are in primary school. One of the ways to do this is constructing student' textbook by providing them with innovative activities and modern learning guideline that increases students' participation in the learning environment to promote those skills.

The existence of textbook is much needed by the teachers to deliver the learning material. Most of the teachers around the world rely on the textbook to be used in instructional activities. It is selected mostly by the teachers among other learning resources as guidance to teach the students. The textbook is a collection of learning material most obviously used by teachers around the world. Many language instructions, students' learning activities, students' exercises, and students' examination material are encountered in the textbook. This may lead to the crucial point that selecting appropriate a textbook following the degree of students' needs and the objective of the curriculum is complicated and challenging.

Above all, many commercial book publishers have published the textbook with various contents covering the learning theme, learning instruction, objective of learning, media and learning aids, step of learning activities, students' exercises, and evaluation activities. However, not all the published textbooks are in line with the objective of the curriculum. Not all the textbooks for students are

perfect. Hence, the teacher should consider and evaluate many things to think in selecting an appropriate textbook as the learning material for students.

In the context of teaching and learning in Indonesia, the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture has given large access for people to get an electronic textbook based on the official curriculum. It is called *Buku Sekolah Elektronik (BSE)* or electronic textbooks which can be easily downloaded by the teacher, the students, the parents, and other related people in the field of education. Since the implementation of 2013 Curriculum, these electronic textbooks are available for primary and secondary school level. For primary school level, the 2013 Curriculum is thematically designed in which a learning material is delivered based on theme to relate different subjects giving students more knowledge on various topics to learn.

There are two types of official BSE published by the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture. They are teachers' handbooks and students' textbooks using thematic learning. Before the books are published, they had gone through the process of reviewing, evaluating, editing, and providing improvements created by the reviewers and the editorial team under the supervision of the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture. The teachers' handbook consists of guidelines for teachers dealing with understanding and using students' textbooks while the students' textbooks themselves are organized based on activities to enhance 2013 Curriculum by prioritizing students' achievements stated on Basic Competence proposed by the government (Asri, 2017).

As the implementation of 2013 Curriculum that put on the students' activeness, the use of students' textbooks should involve in learning theme to be contextualized in the real life so that they will have real modes of what they learn. Thematic learning can be seen as the learning that integrates a variety of subjects competencies as outlined in the subjects in a single theme. It can be viewed as a learning practice integrating resources of a variety topic into one theme of the discussion. In addition, it provides integrated learning programs that focus more on students' participation and learning (Ulfah and Purwanti, 2020). We can see the integration of basic

disciplines like Mathematics, Science, Language, and Social with an exploration of a real-world subject to be implemented practically in the integrated thematic textbook for primary school.

Some previous researchers have conducted the research focused on the integrated thematic textbooks for primary school. Aybek & Aslan (2016) conducted a research in the social studies textbook for the fourth grade of elementary school in accordance with the standards of critical thinking. The result of this research emphasized that it was thought that the standards of critical thinking should be considered when preparing textbooks to maximize students' learning. The social studies textbook has been investigated in this research meet critical thinking standards of clarity, accuracy, significance/relevance, sufficiency standards at a high rate, and partially meet the standards for breadth/depth and precision

The next similar matter was a research conducted by Amini (2017). She conducted a research on the development of integrated learning based students' book to improve elementary school students' competence. This research showed that constructing effective textbook for primary school students should fulfill the elements of validity (content appropriateness, content construction, and language), practicality (knowledge, skills, and behavior), and effectiveness (improvement of students' competence in terms of knowledge, skills, and behavior to thematic learning). Therefore, the constructed textbook will be implemented through thematic learning effectively.

The last similar research was conducted by Ulfah & Purwanti (2020) who investigated the thematic textbook based on local wisdom on the textbook for the first grade of primary school. They concluded that the use of textbooks based on local wisdom value increases students' engagement like active participation in group and classroom discussion, creating a meaningful classroom atmosphere, as well as motivating each other. Since thematic learning is reflected close to students' lives, the local wisdom value was possible to be instilled in students where they can practice in everyday life.

Considering that integrated thematic reflects on the contextualization of students' real life, this research tries to investigate the content of students'

activities on integrated thematic textbook meetings with the 21st century skills as mentioned in the previous part. The objective of this research is to know what kind of the 21st century skills are promoted by the selected integrated thematic textbooks for the primary school under this research. Furthermore, it is expected that this research contributes to either the national government or the commercial textbook publisher providing and exploring effective content for primary school students in Indonesia. Both of them as parts of stakeholders in the field of education should support the future generation of Indonesian having 21st century skills in the globalization era.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed descriptive design with a qualitative approach. The objective of this research was to identify the content of two integrated thematic textbooks currently used in teaching sixth grade primary school students in Indonesia that were published by the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture. The title of both the students’ textbooks to be investigated was *Bumiku* and *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar*. They were published in 2018 based on 2013 Curriculum which has been revised in 2018. The students’ activities provided in the textbooks were identified to evaluate the presented activities which promoting students’ 21st century skills.

The data analysis of this research followed the qualitative data analysis principle of Miles et al (2014). They are data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Figure 1 below shows the process of qualitative data analysis following the principle of Miles et al (2014):

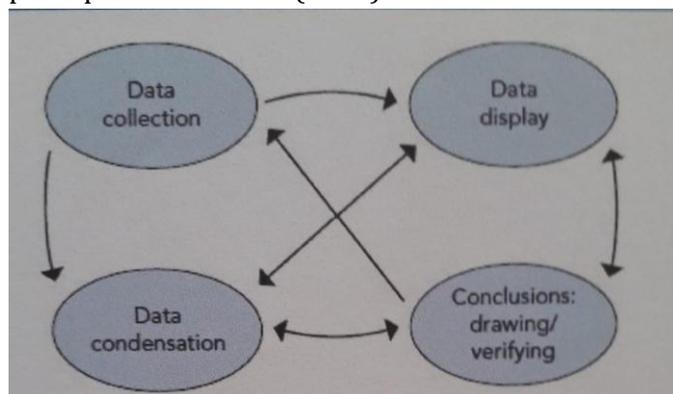


Figure 1. The Process of Qualitative Data Analysis from Miles et al (2014)

After collecting the data, the researchers conducted the first step of this data analysis through data condensation. It was the activity in which the researchers identified all the provided students’ activities in those textbooks. After that, the researchers categorized and summarized it with each of criteria in Partnership of 21st century skills as mentioned in the previous part.

The next step in analysing the data was data display. After categorizing all the students’ activities on the textbooks with the Partnership of 21st century skills criteria, the researchers calculated the frequency of students’ activities consisting of texts, exercises, and a summary of material representing the 21st century skills have been found. The result of this calculation was presented in forms of table. Each table was followed by a figure to show the examples of content representing the set of 21st century skills identified in the textbooks.

The last one is drawing a conclusion where the qualitative analysis was made to show the interpretation of each findings got from both of the students’ textbooks for getting a constructive conclusion. The conclusion was made by identifying the majority of each Partnership of 21st century skills criterion that occurred on the investigated students’ activities in the textbooks.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research analyzed the students’ activities promoting the 21st century skills in two integrated thematic textbooks for sixth grade of the primary school published by the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture. The following tables were the results presenting the frequency of content of those students’ textbooks based on four criteria of 21st century skills that have been identified. Table 1 presented the frequency of activities promoting critical thinking and problem solving skills in students’ textbooks.

Table 1. The Frequency of Activities Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills in Students’ Textbooks

Criteria of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills	<i>Bumiku</i> Textbook	<i>Menjelajah Angkasa Luar</i> Textbook	Total
Categorizing	10	8	18
Comparing and Contrasting	9	8	17

Classifying	8	5	13
Predicting	4	4	8
Drawing Conclusion	8	9	17
Relating	4	5	9
Generating idea	18	10	28
Making inference	12	13	25

Based on Table 1 above, it was concluded that generating ideas stand up as the most students' activities provided in *Bumiku* and *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* textbooks promoting critical thinking and problem solving skills. This activity required students to develop their idea largely after having an understanding of the material that has been learned. The example of generating idea activities could be seen in Figure 2 and 3 as follows:

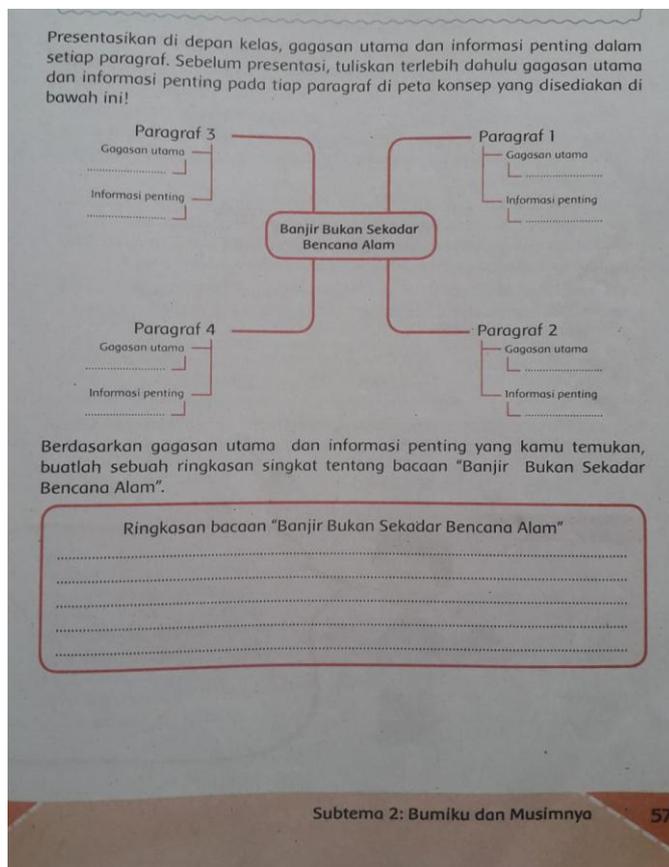


Figure 2. The Example of Students' Activities Promoting Critical Thinking Skills in *Bumiku* textbook on page 57.

Figure 2 showed that critical thinking skill occur in the activity where the students were asked to identify the detailed information by stating the main idea and supporting idea based on the text about flood and natural disaster they have read in *Bumiku* textbook. Moreover, the students should summarize the content of the text according to the main idea and supporting ideas have been found in the

provided space. Besides the critical thinking skill, problem solving skill also occurred in some students' activities in the textbooks. Figure 3 presented one of example of students' activities promoting problem solving skill from the textbooks.

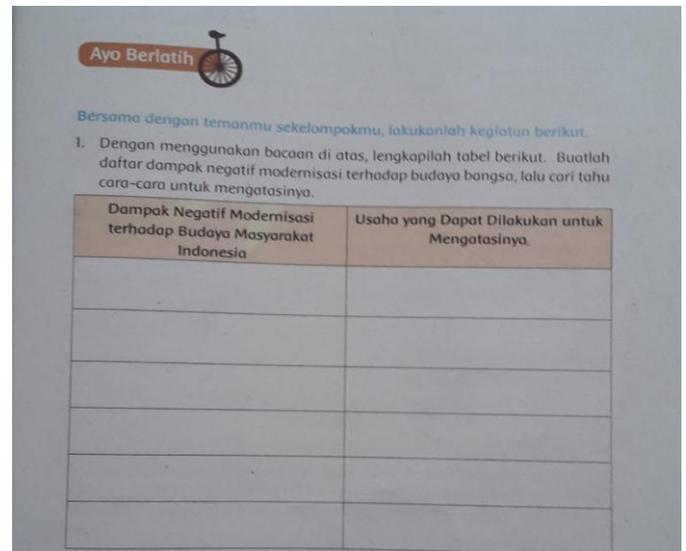


Figure 3. The Example of Students' Activities Promoting Problem Solving Skill *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* textbook on page 109

Based on figure 3 above, problem solving skill occurred in the activities where the students were asked to classify the negative effect of modernization toward Indonesian culture. Thus, the students were also asked to have problem solving skill where they should think about the effort to solve the negative effect of modernization as stated in *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* textbook.

The second criterion in Partnership of 21st century skill have been investigated in the textbooks was communication skill. Table 2 presented the frequency of activities promoting critical thinking and problem solving skills in students' textbooks.

Table 2. The Frequency of Activities Promoting Communication Skill in Students' Textbooks

Criteria of Communication Skill	<i>Bumiku</i>	<i>Menjelajah Angkasa Luar</i>	Total
Communicating	4	6	10
Presenting orally	7	8	15
Summarizing	4	4	8
Discussing	8	10	18

Table 2 above presented the discussion activity among students as the highest number occurring in both students' textbooks promoting communication

skill. An example of discussion activity was the students interviewed their classmates about the cooperation they usually do in the classroom activities as captured in Figure 4 as follows:

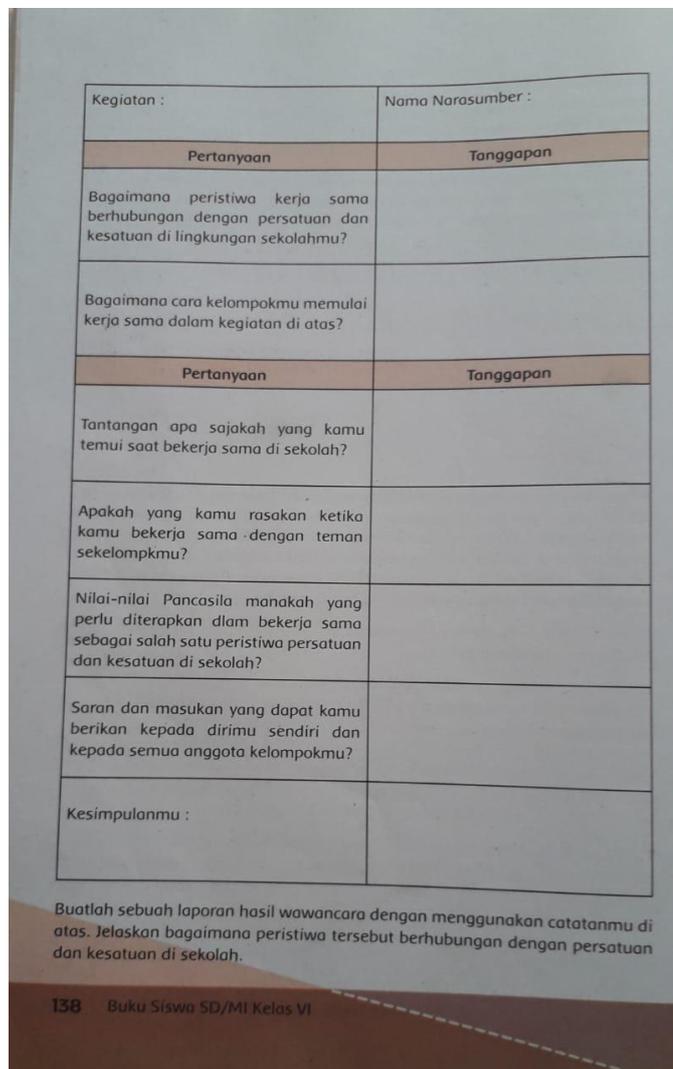


Figure 4. An Example Students' Activities Promoting Communication Skill in *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* textbook on page 138

Based on figure 4, the provided activities trained students having communication skill. The students were asked to interview their classmates to gaining information about cooperation activity as the implementation of *Pancasila* value at school environment. The question items were made specifically to guide students to get informative oral responses from others while they were communicating in this interview activity.

The next criterion in Partnership of 21st century skill have been investigated in the textbooks was collaboration skill. Table 3 presented the frequency

of activities promoting collaboration skill in students' textbooks.

Table 3. The Frequency of Activities Promoting Collaboration Skill in Students' Textbooks

Criteria of Collaboration Skill	<i>Bumiku</i>	<i>Menjelajah Angkasa Luar</i>	Total
Working in group	13	16	29
Working with different community	-	-	-

Based on the result of Table 3, working in a group became the only students' activities that occurred in both students' textbooks. There was no activity in the book promoting students to work with different communities. Most of activities promoting students' collaboration skill were constructed in forms of working in a pair and working in a group. The sample of students' activities for working in a group was captured in Figure 5 as follows:

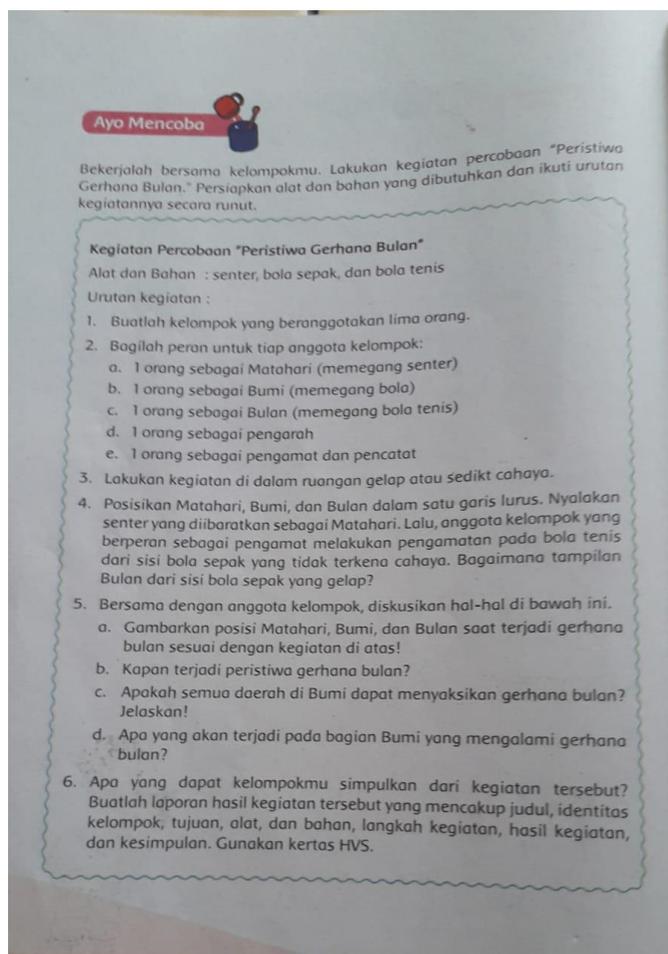


Figure 5. An example of students' activities promoting collaboration skill in *Bumiku* textbook on page 84

Based on figure 5 above, the students were asked to make teamwork simulating the process of lunar eclipse occurs. They should work in a group of five in which the member of the group acted as the sun, the earth, the moon, the observer of activity, and the instructor of the activity. At the end of this activity, they were asked to draw the conclusion and to produce a written report as the reflection.

The last criterion in Partnership of 21st century skills has been investigated in students' activities of the textbooks was creativity and innovation skills. The finding of this area was presented in Table 4 as follows:

Table 4. The Frequency of Activities Promoting Creativity and Innovation Skills in Students' Textbooks

Criteria of Creativity and Innovation Skills	Bumiku	Menjelajah Angkasa Luar	Total
Making simulation	3	2	5
Creating product creatively	8	8	16

Table 4 above showed that most of students' activities in both students' textbooks to encourage students' creativity and innovation was creating product creatively based on material they have learned. An example of this activity was presented in Figure 6 as follows:

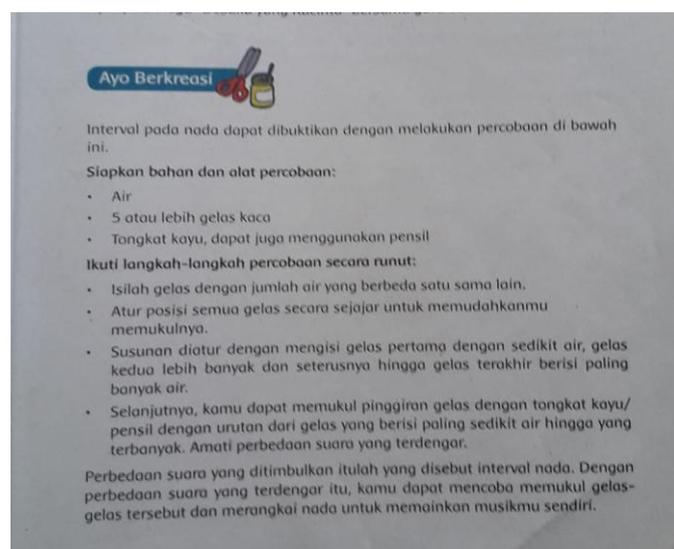


Figure 6. An Example of Students' Activities Promoting Creativity Skill in *Bumiku* textbook on page 47

Based on Figure 6 above, the students were asked to create a simple art after learning music interval. They were asked to create a creative art from the glasses and a wood. It indicated that the students were encouraged to produce a product creatively as the learning result to have a deep understanding of the material being learned.

The result of this research concluded that the students' dominant activities occurring in those textbooks were generating ideas and making inference activities to promote critical thinking and problem solving skills, discussing activity to promote students' communication skill, working in a group to promote students' collaboration skill, and creating product creatively activity to promote students' creativity and innovation skills.

Preparing students to have 21st century skills since they are in the primary school becomes a crucial thing and the national government should consider this to be able to go ahead. The young generation who live in the era of competition must be trained to have particular skills to support them along with the development of science and technology. The primary school that becomes the first step of educational system leads to the fact that the process of learning in the early level will affect the future step of their education (Boyaci and Atalay, 2016). As living in today's 21st century, they should be trained on how to have critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, as well as creativity and innovation skills. Having these skills indicate that the students are required to increase their quality of individual life, self capacity, and social life to live along with the advance of science and technology.

Learning material as one of the instructional components determines the thing that the students will learn in their education. A textbook that becomes the transformation of learning material should be designed to provide lifelong learning and 21st century skills for the students since they are in the primary school. Integrated thematic which is officially regulated by the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture for all grades of primary school extends to all subject competencies. This one, *Pendidikan Pancasila and Kewarganegaraan (PPKn)* or Pancasila and Citizenship Education, *Bahasa*

Indonesia, Science or *Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam (IPA)*, Social Studies or *Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial (IPS)*, Mathematics, Physical Education, Cultural Arts, and Workshops except for Religion (Dewantara, 2020).

Dealing with the integration of various subjects as learning material for primary school, it is expected that the textbook as the main learning resources for students explores the various activities that systematically encourage them to involve. Such a clear pedagogic emphasis to promote student-centered learning is necessary for primary school in today's 21st century. The skills of the 21st century include a wide variety of competencies, expertise, and skills essential for learning, living, and engaging in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world (Videnovic and Karadimce, 2018).

The two integrated thematic textbooks under this research are investigated to know the kind of 21st century skills that are presented from the students' activities for primary school entitled *Bumiku* and *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar*. The criteria of 21st century skills are taken from the Partnership of 21st century skills. They are critical thinking and problem solving skill, communication skill, collaboration skill, and creativity and innovation skill.

The first result comes from the critical thinking and problem solving skill that have been found out in both the students' textbooks. The students' dominant activities in promoting these skills are generating ideas and making inferences. Generating ideas in *Bumiku* and *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* textbooks are heavily on activities asking students to develop ideas largely after learning the material. For instance: the students are given some pictures of the flood as one of natural disaster in the world. They are asked to read the text about flood phenomenon. Then, they are asked to write down the main idea and supporting idea for each paragraph of the text in forms of mind map as presented in Figure 2.

Furthermore, the example of students' activities on problem solving skill is presented in Figure 3. They are asked to read the text about the impact of modernization on society. After that, they are asked to state what kind of negative impact from modernization toward Indonesian people and what kind of something we can do to solve it. They should think about solving the problem of such a situation

given based on the topic they have learned. These activities encourage students to think hard as generating ideas and making inferences are complex skills. These refer to the ability to assess the value of information and come to a conclusion about to do. Critical thinking and solving problem skills are already addressed as an important part of the learning process. Linking science topics with real life and working on conceptual clarification of science are some suggestions for developing critical thinking and problem solving skills the teacher can do in the classroom (Santos, 2017).

The second finding of this research is students' activities on promoting communication skill as presented in Figure 4. The discussion activity among students as the highest number occurs in both students' textbooks promoting communication skill. An example of discussion activity is the students interview their classmates about the cooperation they usually do in the classroom activities.

Communication skill motivates students to recognize the value of communication by expressing themselves to have oral dialogue for a given situation. Their awareness of the "other"—the audience—is essential to their ability to communicate. Likewise, the students voiced their concerns about wanting to hear and *be heard*, to know and *be known*, and to understand and *be understood*. The way the students are understood is through their ability to do this way (Lundeberg, 2016). Having communication skills should be trained to students since they are in primary school. Encouraging students to verbalize their ideas and knowledge will prepare them to compete in the future 21st century life.

Students' activities on promoting collaboration skill become the third finding of this research. Both of textbooks under this research dominantly require students to work in a group. As collaboration is an activity to support the concept of *trust*, *sharing*, *belonging*, and *respect*, the students are asked to create teamwork for working on such activity. Figure 5 shows that the students are asked to make a group of five. They should simulate and perform the process of how lunar eclipse occurs. A student acts as the sun, the other two acts as the earth and the moon, and the rest act as the observer and the instructor. Simulating this topic, the students should

work collaboratively to complete this performance and draw the conclusion on what they have done reflecting the process of a lunar eclipse. This activity indicates that collaboration allows things to happen that a student cannot do alone. Simulating the process of a lunar eclipse can take more time and it is impossible to do it individually. Making a team work is one of the fundamentals of collaboration (Ata, 2019). By collaborating, students can realize in person how their engagement contributes to the success of the simulation.

The last finding of this research is students' activities in promoting creativity and innovation skills. Figure 6 as an example of students' activity of these skills show that they are asked to create music interval by themselves using glasses and wood. They are encouraged to think about producing creative art after learning a particular material. Creativity and innovation skills are two things needed in the 21st century skill to create human potency by eliciting positive aspects of the individual. Nakano & Wechsler (2018) state that creativity and innovation skills that are trained to students from primary school will motivate them to have a desire to learn genuinely, to discover new subjects, and to go beyond the teaching offered in the classroom. The students are motivated to produce their own creation as a product reflecting the learning outcome of what they have learned. Thus, having creativity and innovation skills indicate that the students try to express their idea largely and use the idea creation techniques to produce their own work (Wilcox et al., 2017).

Beyond the variations of students' activities promoting 21st century skills that have been investigated towards both of textbooks under this research, there is an additional point that can be reflected from all the findings. The teachers as educators must be able to deliver interesting and meaningful students' activities using these two textbooks. Creating creative ways of learning to primary school students will be in line with 2013 Curriculum goal set and with the need of having 21st century skills itself. Finally, it is expected that the students' activities in integrated thematic textbooks promote more on 21st century skills to primary school students as the first step of education level

preparing them to work along with the future globalization.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings of this research conclude that the students' dominant activities occur in *Bumiku* and *Menjelajah Angkasa Luar* textbooks for sixth grade of primary school are generating ideas and making inference activities to promote critical thinking and problem solving skills, discussing activity to promote students' communication skill, working in a group to promote students' collaboration skill, and creating product or activity creatively to promote students' creativity and innovation skills. Above all, both of the textbooks have provided students with some various activities to promote 21st century skills.

Indeed, the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture as the official publisher of these textbooks has considered the importance of preparing and training primary school students as the early step of education level having those skills to compete in future globalization. It is expected that the other books commercial publishers will do the same thing to produce qualified students' textbooks with regarding on providing constructive students' activities promoting 21st century skills.

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