

## **Cascading a new knowledge: the implementation of reference management software in the academic writing class**

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### **Abstract**

College students should meet numerous requirements to produce a well-written academic paper. One of those requirements is constructing correct references. Nonetheless, based on the phenomenon spotted in the author's academic writing class, arranging references manually is not an effortless task. Time-consuming and style memorizing are the two main obstacles faced by the students. To answer the preceding problems, the author, the teacher in charge in class, proposed a solution by implementing EndNote as reference management software. It enables students to write references automatically. Seventy students were involved as the participants while EndNote was administered. To cascade the knowledge of the mechanism of implementing EndNote, this paper aimed to describe the steps involved. Video recording and checklist form were utilized as research instruments. The results revealed four steps of implementing EndNote used by the teacher. They are planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. By explaining those steps, it is expected that the mechanism of implementing EndNote can be explained and adapted by other teachers and students facing the same problems.

**Keywords:** *reference management software, EndNote, planning, implementation, observation, and reflection*

### **1. Introduction**

Academic writing is a product of the mind that is constructed from mental and cognitive processes (Burke, 2010). It is considered a hard thing to be accomplished and has multifarious task to be completed (Rinda, Novawan, & Miqawati, 2018). Even for most

fluent English speakers, advanced academic writing in English is a challenging task to cope with. Nonetheless, it is especially difficult for English as a second language (ESL) students, particularly Asian students. The ESL students must learn grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, and other surface-level elements of English composition and acquire American and British rhetorical forms and literary genres. With that in mind, it is generally accepted that writing academically is not easy task to do.

Furthermore, to produce a good piece of academic paper, several requirements must be taken into account. One of the most crucial things is making correct references (Fadda, 2012). References provide documentation about the sources of information and idea of the paper that the students are writing about (Troyka & Hesse, 2006). Additionally, references also allow the reader of an academic paper to have a deeper exploration of the detailed information. Also, the point that should be highlighted is that the writer can avoid plagiarism accusations by having correct references (Roig, 2006). Plagiarism is considered dishonest and misconduct in the academic world that causes short-term and long-term negative consequences such as poor academic integrity (Rinda, 2019).

Since the substantial role of writing correct references explained in the above paragraph cannot be denied, the practice of it must be implemented. Based on the author's experience as a teacher of an academic writing class in 2018/2019, the students were always directed to turn in the paper using correct references. However, most of the students faced difficulty in writing accurate references. When the teacher conducted an informal talk with them, it was revealed that the students tended to skip writing references. Based on the students' view, writing references was time-consuming and required lots of work, such as memorizing the referencing style, punctuation, and organization. Coping with the previous problem, the teacher took her responsibility as both teacher and classroom manager (Rinda & Indrastana, 2020). The proposed solution is the form of implementing reference management software.

The use of reference management software in the teacher's academic writing class is believed to be the correct thing to do under several justifications. First, reference management software has multifarious benefits such as arranging references, searching for articles' databases, and automatically creating bibliographies (Fitzgerald, 2002). Second, in the past, making references has not always been easy just like today. References were made manually by involving many indexing cards to write to information needed (Ivey & Crum, 2018). Having that difficulty, the students who write an academic paper were not only budgeting the time to construct the paper but also arranging the information about the sources of the article in an ineffective way. Then today, by using reference management software, the students can save their time to develop their paper only while the software can do the references. Last, reference management software is also easy to use. One of the examples of reference management software is EndNote. EndNote can be used on both desktop and mobile phones. While the students want to use it, the software can be easily installed and attached in Microsoft Word. It has offline availability to store the data locally. The user can recall the data

anywhere and anytime. Also, instead of having licensed products, EndNote offers a free trial version.

In addition, instead of several benefits of reference management software mentioned in the previous paragraph, several studies conducted lately also support its implementation. Butros & Taylor (2011) reviewed the reference management software products widely used: EndNote, RefWorks, Mendeley, and Zotero. The study proved the advantages of using those products. Slightly different from the previous research, Ivey & Crum (2018) explained the features of EndNote, Mendeley, RefWorks, and Zotero. The study provides a description and mentions the positive functions of each product. Seeing from another point of view, Francese (2011) conducted an online survey on university students about the use of reference management software. Instead of comparing the products just like many other studies, his paper exposed that the users need more knowledge and understand the mechanism of using reference management software. People need to have prior knowledge first before operating the product.

Understanding the previous explanation about the vital role of reference management software, this paper aimed to describe the steps to implement one of the products, EndNote, in the teacher's academic writing class. By exposing each step in detail, it is hoped that there would be a cascading knowledge about the mechanism of using reference management software, especially EndNote to other teachers and students facing the same problems. For future implications, it is expected that the difficulty of writing references can be minimized.

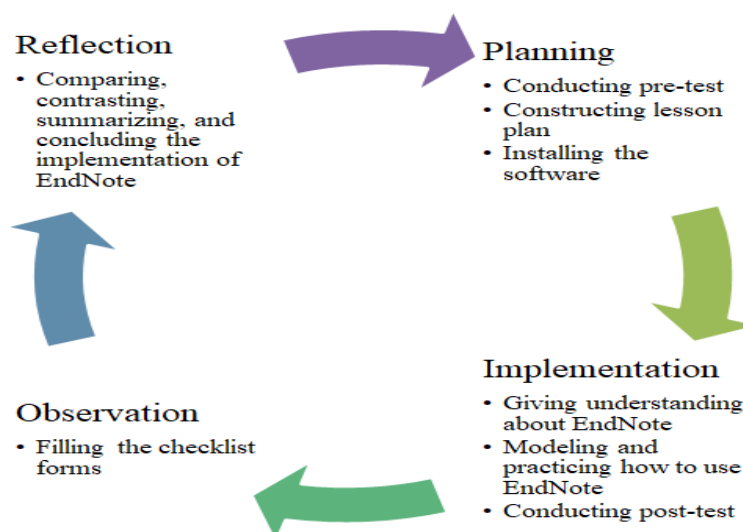
## **2. Research Method**

Seventy students taking academic writing class year of 2018/2019 and one teacher were involved as participants. Descriptive research was selected as a research design to cope with the purpose of this paper, which is describing the steps used by the teacher to implement reference management software, EndNote.

The author of this paper used the recording to gather information about each step implemented by the teacher. By having that recording, the author can easily identify the steps by watching the video more than once. Also, to strengthen the data gathered, observation was conducted using a checklist form. All the activities done by the teacher were reported through that form. After the data were collected, the process of analysis was started. Then, the finishing process was to report the result in the paper.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

Related to the steps used by the teacher to implement reference management software, EndNote, in academic writing class year of 2018/2019, it was found that there were four steps involved. They are planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Those four steps are adopted from Kemmis & McTaggart (2000) as follows:



*Figure 1. Steps to Implement EndNote*

*a. Planning*

Planning was the first step conducted by the teacher before implementing EndNote. Three activities were involved in this preparation phase: conducting a pre-test, constructing lesson plan, and installing the reference management software, End-Note.

The first activity, conducting a pre-test, was positioned as an opening gate for implementing EndNote. A pre-test was administered to identify the pre-existing knowledge (Berry, 2008). Based on the video recording and form of observation, during the pre-test, the students were asked to write down a short essay involving 300 words at least. Not only distributing the instruction on how to write it, but the scoring rubric was also given. In that rubric, one of the requirements that the students must fulfil was having the five citations on the paper using APA 6th style. After conducting the pre-test, the teacher assessed the students' scores and tabulated them in Microsoft Excel.

The second activity in the planning step is constructing a lesson plan. The objectives of the lesson and how to achieve them covered in four meetings were stated. According to that lesson plan, the first meeting lasted for 150 minutes. The teacher explained the importance of writing correct references, the introduction to EndNote, and the procedure to use it. In the second and third meetings, the teacher planned to demonstrate how to use EndNote. The students stayed in groups and did the practices. In the last session, a discussion session was conducted.

Then, the third activity was installing EndNote. The teacher installed EndNote on the computer in the laboratory where the teaching and learning activity was planned. After all the processes ran well, the teacher moved to the next step.

*b. Implementation*

Implementation is when all the plans designed in the planning step are implemented in the teaching and learning processes. This step aims to collect information and data (Wulandari, 2014). Three main activities were conducted regarding the recording and checklist forms: giving the students an understanding about EndNote, modelling and practicing how to use it, and conducting a post-test.

Before allowing the students to use EndNote, the teacher explained the software. The teacher started by giving general information about EndNote, the software's description, the features provided, and step on how to operate it. While the teacher explained the product, the students checked the features of EndNote. Before closing the sessions, the teacher offered time for the students to ask questions and discuss them.

After the explanation was completed, the next activity was giving the demonstration. The teacher modelled how to use the software. The teacher believes this part is a tangible process that must be administered. In line with Salisu & Ransom (2014) modelling provides precise and valuable representations of knowledge and visual manifestation of the substance. During the modelling process, the teacher showed the students how to open EndNote, how to insert the information, and how to make citations automatically with various styles of referencing such as APA 6th, numbered, and annotated. Then, the students were allowed to work in a group and practice in one session. The next activity was an individual practice.

To end the session, a post-test was conducted. Having the same instruction as the pre-test test, the students were asked to write down 300 words short essay involving five citations. While the topic of writing on the pre-test was plagiarism, this post-test talked about hoax prevention. The same scoring rubric was used to score the students' papers.

#### *c. Observation*

The purpose of the observation step is to note whether the implementation of EndNote has good or bad impacts on the problem (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) in (Burns, 2010). The observation was conducted by filling the checklist forms. The checklist consists of 3 columns: types of activity planned in the lesson plan, how it was implemented, and the student's obstacles. To fill the form, the author listed all the activities conducted by the teacher in the implementation step. Then, the teacher marked the second column by giving a checklist when it was successfully implemented and adding a cross sign when it was not successfully implemented. Then, the teacher also wrote in detail about the question raised and the difficulties the students faced while they were involved in the implementation step.

#### *d. Reflection*

In this reflection step, the author drew conclusions based on the data collected in the previous step (Latief, 2009 ). This step involved comparing, contrasting, summarizing, and concluding the implementation of EndNote as a proposed solution to the students' difficulty in writing references.

The step was started by checking the observation list. From that observation list, the teacher analyzed all the activities during the implementation of EndNote. The teacher then separated them into two activities that could be conducted well and activities that still face some difficulty to administer. After that, the teacher analyzed the appeared problems. The data was used as base information for the teacher to revise the lesson plan and re-implement the other steps.

Also, the scores taken from pre-test and post-test were compared to see whether the use of EndNote can solve the students' difficulty in writing references. The teacher then concluded the significance of using EndNote by analyzing the compared score. After completing all processes, the teacher documented them by writing a report.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous part, it was concluded that the teacher used four main steps to implement reference management software, EndNote in academic writing class year of 2018/2019. They are planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The first step called planning covers conducting pre-test, constructing lesson plan, and installing the software. Then, the second step, implementation, covers giving the students understanding about EndNote, modeling and practicing how to use it, and conducting post-test. The next step called observation was administered by filling the checklist forms. Last, reflection was conducted by comparing, contrasting, summarizing, and concluding the implementation of EndNote as a proposed solution to the students' difficulty in writing references.

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