



Conceptualisation of a serious game for citation and reference styles

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SCENE-SETTING



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Here, we'll set the **context** for CiteSaga's development, focusing on the challenges faced by South African students in mastering citation within resource-limited environments. We'll introduce the team, outlining the roles of these people, designers, and developers who collaboratively shaped the game. This collaboration was essential in creating a tool tailored to the needs of both students and educators.

THE CONTEXT

In HE, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to connect their work with existing knowledge, avoid plagiarism, and contribute to academic debates by way of citation and referencing. Despite the importance of such skills, students struggle to master citation formats required across disciplines.



CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH CITATION & REFERENCING

Students demonstrate their ability to connect with existing knowledge, prevent plagiarism, and meaningfully contribute to academic debates through citation and referencing **(Duff, Rogers, and Harris, 2006; Adhikari, 2018).**

Despite its importance, students often struggle to learn and apply various citation formats (Lanning, 2016; Hamzaoui, 2021). This challenge is further compounded by the range of styles required across different academic fields.

To address these struggles, educators are turning to creative and engaging methods to reinforce citation skills (Nilson, 2016). Serious games (SGs), which combine the enjoyment of gaming with education, offer a promising solution (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2019). By using games to teach citation and referencing, we can potentially enhance student motivation, improve critical thinking, and develop better academic writing and research skills.

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ROLE ALLOCATION



Anneke Coetzee

Content Specialist, Tester

Annecke provides subject matter expertise to the project so the game focuses on the appropriate content for the right audience.



Veruschka Pelser-Carstens

PM, Researcher, Tester

Veruschka oversees various managerial aspects of the project. She also coordinates communication, meetings, and the GDD.



Gordon's expertise lies in game design (logic, flow, rules), accessibility concerns, research, and end-user testing.



Creative Director, Art, Designer

Lance creates visual assets, balances game elements, designs game systems, builds narratives, and oversees game polish.



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Byron Bunt

Lead Researcher

Byron spearheads the research and intellectual property (disclosure) efforts surrounding the project.



The North-West University Library is the interest group that will fund the printing and distribution of the project.



THE BEB

Here, we'll dive into the challenges students face with citation in higher education and how these struggles affect their academic success. We'll then introduce our proposed solution, CiteSaga, a game designed to make learning citation more engaging and effective. We'll also explore the well-documented benefits of using games in higher education and how they enhance learning. Finally, we'll outline the research problem that CiteSaga aims to address, emphasising the need for innovative, interactive tools in academic writing education.



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In the evolving landscape of higher education, academic integrity remains a cornerstone of scholarly work. However, with the rise of generative AI and citation management tools, students face new challenges in **maintaining this integrity**, particularly in mastering citation and referencing.

THE SOLUTION

Serious games offer a novel solution, blending the interactive nature of gaming with educational objectives to *reinforce critical skills*.

...But... "Why should students learn citation styles if tools like Endnote automate this practice? Why do we cite?"

CiteSaga, our <u>board game</u>, transforms the learning of citation and referencing into an engaging, experiential process, ensuring students can navigate the complexities of academic integrity even in the age of AI and automation.

Developed at North-West University, CiteSaga is particularly suited for environments with **limited educational resources** or **low resource stability**, making it an accessible tool for enhancing academic integrity across various contexts.

Our goal with CiteSaga is to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring students not only learn but internalise the importance of proper citation and referencing, especially when inundated with Al-generated content.



Serious games (SGs) have proven highly effective in improving learning outcomes across various fields, including education, healthcare, and even military training (Yu, Gao, and Wang, 2021).



Using SGs in HE, especially in researchfocused modules, can significantly boost student engagement and comprehension, providing dynamic platforms where theory meets practice (Ferro et al., 2021).

SGs enhance student **involvement**, promote active learning, and foster essential skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making (Westera, 2019; Rosa et al., 2021).



By aligning with constructivist theories, SGs promote active engagement and reflection, motivating students to engage in selfdirected learning and master complex topics (Young et al., 2012).



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They've been **applied** in healthcare to help novice professionals master risk management and in global health to inspire learning and innovation (Mason and Loader, 2019; Smith et al., 2020).



By incorporating complex decision-making and critical thinking, SGs promote lifelong **learning**. They encourage students to apply skills in different settings, preparing them for a changing world (Wu & Sun, 2023).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Challenges in HE

Students in HE struggle with mastering citation and reference formats, which hinders their ability to interact with research, prevent plagiarism, and contribute to academic conversations.

Curricula Coverage

At institutions like NWU, referencing is only covered in the 1st year, with students encountering them again in the 3rd year. This gap leaves students underprepared for postgraduate research.

Method Limitations

Traditional teaching techniques don't effectively address the complexity of citation formats, leading to errors that can affect the quality of academic journals and increase costs for publishers and universities (Goodman et al., 2018; Kratochvíl et al., 2022; Rozell, 2022).

Need for Innovation

Given these challenges (among others), educators are encouraged to explore new, engaging strategies to help students develop strong citation and reference skills that will serve them throughout their academic careers and set them up for sustainable academic succes.











Role of SGs

SGs offer a fun and memorable way to teach citation and referencing. We can also integrate them into research-focused programs for a more sustainable impact (Ifenthaler and Yau, 2020).

Long-term Impact(s)

In an increasingly digital and resourcelimited world, developing strong foundational skills like citation and referencing prepares students for future academic challenges. Mastery of these skills supports success not just in university but throughout their professional careers.



THE SOLUTION

Here, we'll focus on the **project approach** that guided the development of CiteSaga, highlighting how we combined Educational Design, Design Science Research (DSR), and Agile Design to create an effective educational tool. We'll walk through the iterative design cycles that allowed us to continuously refine CiteSaga, incorporating feedback and ensuring alignment with learning objectives. Additionally, we'll outline the key phases of development, from problem identification and concept creation to prototyping, evaluation, and final refinement.







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COMBINING EDUCATIONAL DESIGN, **DSR, AND AGILE DESIGN**

Educational Design and DSR:

 CiteSaga uses Educational Design to create effective learning experiences and DSR to integrate practical solutions with theoretical development.

Key Features of Educational Design and DSR:

• Both methodologies emphasise iteration, feedback, and interdisciplinary collaboration to refine learning outcomes and address educational challenges.

Combining Design Approaches:

• Blending Educational Design, DSR, and Agile methods enables a user-centred, flexible development process that incorporates stakeholder feedback.

Agile Iterative Design Cycle:

• Agile design allows for rapid prototyping and adaptation through sprints, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness.





THE APPROACH

This mixed-method approach leverages the strengths of Educational Design, DSR, and Agile design to create a game that is practical, innovative, and responsive to stakeholder feedback.





CYCLES FOR CITESAGA











Phases are not restricted. they are iterative and can be



PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Context and Origins

Teaching citation is challenging and timeconsuming. CiteSaga, part of NWU's Referella initiative, was developed to address this through serious game design.

Phase 2: Design / Construc.

Developed gameplay, mechanics, and components (e.g., boards, tokens). Used AI tools like ChatGPT and Fotor for rapid iteration of game components/narrative.

Phase 1: Problem / Motivation

Identified citation struggles in higher education. Worked with educators and developers to design a game focused on academic writing, ethical scholarship, and citation skills.

Phases 3: Evaluation

Integrated game elements into prototypes for testing with students and other stakeholders. Feedback from play-testing refined gameplay mechanics and ensured alignment with educational goals.



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Phase 4: Maturation

Final phase involved refining based on feedback, theoretical understanding, and creating a conceptual framework to solidify learning outcomes and objectives.



DEV OVERVIEW

Here, we'll focus on how CiteSaga was developed as a citation-focused educational game. The game features a rich narrative with fleshed-out characters, factions, and environments. Players assume roles within this world, navigating various quests that involve solving citation and referencing tasks. The gameplay revolves around players earning points by accurately applying citation styles to realworld dilemmas, making critical decisions, and overcoming citation-related obstacles, all within an engaging and interactive environment to reinforce academic key skills.







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PEOPLE MAKE GAMES

Games are made by people. CiteSaga wasn't just an idea—it was built by a team of faculty, designers, and developers who worked together to solve the problem of teaching citation. We aligned the game's goals with the curriculum while navigating real-world constraints like time and budget. Collaboration was key to making it both educational and engaging.





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	Role	Activities	Specialisations
	Content Advisors	Curriculum alignment, learning objective definition	Subject matter expertise, pedagogy
	Game Development	Concept design, rule creation, playtesting	Game design, mechanics, interaction
	Visual Development	Artwork, component design, visual theme	Graphic design, illustration
S	Production	Prototype creation, manufacturing coordination	Engineering, production
	Coordination & Planning	Timeline management, resource allocation	Project management, organisation
	End Users	Playtesting, feedback provision	End-user experience
	Financial Support	Funding, investment oversight	Finance, investment
rs	Marketing & Distribution	Marketing, sales, distribution	Marketing, sales, logistics
	Compliance Oversight	Ensure compliance with educational standards	Educational regulations, standards
	Accessibility Guidance	Ensure game is accessible to users	Accessibility design
	Legal Oversight	Contracts, intellectual property, compliance	Legal regulations, contracts
	Testing & Quality Control	Testing for quality and consistency	Quality control, testing

MECHANICAL FEATURES

Turn-based.

Players take turns completing a series of actions that include drawing cards, arranging citations, etc.

Card drawing.

Players draw from the Citation Deck to determine the elements (Author, Title, Date) required

Citation building.

Players place elements collected from various areas on the board, onto the citation card to attempt to accurately construct them

Verification.

The Crystal of Citation used to verify a citation's accuracy, gaining or losing points based

Character abilities.

Each character has unique abilities that affect gameplay, such as speeding up citation construction

Special events.

Event Cards introduce unexpected challenges or opportunities, adding an element of unpredictability

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Scoring.

Players earn points



Rebuild.

Optional cooperative gameplay features



Game Title	Game Components & Description	Objective(s)
Error Quest	Mock academic papers with intentional errors and a deck of "Correction Cards".	Players identify errors in the pa completeness.
Citation Swap	Card game with academic passages and citations.	Players swap and match correc wins.
Source Showdown	Board game with various source types (books, articles, etc.) and citation style cards (APA, MLA, etc.).	Move around the board, draw s
Plagiarism Pursuit	Digital board game with plagiarism reports.	Players submit a mini essay, reo board.
Integrity Quiz Whiz	Quiz board game with multiple-choice questions on academic integrity.	Answer questions to move forv Whiz".
Paraphrase Party	Card game with original and paraphrased statements.	Players draw a card with an ori judge accuracy.
Ethics Escape Room	Physical or virtual escape room with scenarios on academic breaches.	Solve puzzles related to acade
Tool Time Challenge	Board game with challenges based on referencing tools like Zotero.	Players must complete challeng accuracy.
Annotate & Elevate	Deck of source cards and a timer.	Players pick a card, read the sc
Citation Treasure Hunt	Adventure board game with "Source Islands".	Players navigate islands, collec each correctly cited source.
Integrity Island Workshop	Board game with event spaces related to lectures and workshops.	Players advance, land on event workshops. Points for participa



SECTION 4

aper, use "Correction Cards" to fix them, and earn points for accuracy and

t citations with the given academic passages. The fastest correct matcher

source cards, and create correct citations based on the drawn style card.

ceive a simulated plagiarism report, and have to "correct" the issues on the

vard. The goal is to reach the end first, demonstrating you're the "Integrity

ginal statement and must provide a paraphrased version. Other players

mic integrity to "escape" the room.

ges based on tasks they'd do in citation tools. Collect points for speed and

purce, and have a limited time to write an annotated bibliography entry.

ing source details and avoiding the "Plagiarism Pirates". Earn treasure for

spaces, and answer questions or perform tasks based on lectures or tion and correctness.

EARLY CONCEPTS



CITESAGA: A QUICK LOOK















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Frigid Mountains The Citehold Heights

GAME ENVIRONMENTS



ENVIRONMENT CARDS

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Unlock the secrets of Beast Meat Brews, a guide to curing and preparing meats from Taleterra's magical creatures. Discover traditional recipes, preservation techniques, and the unique culinary arts that bring out the best in enchanted beast meats.

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Immerse yourself in Fae Folklore Fun, a series of whimsical animated shorts seen through your crystal ball. Delight in the mischievous escapades of fae beings and explore their enchanting tales and magical mishaps from the fae realm.





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Explore the Dragonkin Decrees, a codex of ancient laws shaping the lives of Taleterra's dragonkin. This tome covers territorial rights, honor codes, and the majestic traditions that guide the powerful and ancient dragonkin clans through their grand dominion.

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Hidden Agenda

Requires the following citation tokens:

Delve into the dark realms with Whispers in the Shadows, a meticulous collection of proceedings from the Ashenfolio's clandestine symposium. Revealing covert operations, arcane manipulations, and strategic plots.



CITATION CARDS









CHARACTERS

- Princess Referella
- Prince Cite-A-Lot
- Tomebough, the Sage
- Sir Pendragraph
- Sir Duskwrit
- Queen Cinder Scroll
- EchoQuill, the Witch
- Thistlepage, the Linguist Ranger









The Emberpage Diaspora



GAME FACTIONS

Kingdom of Citehold

Drive: Maintain order, promote justice, uphold referencing

Incentive: Ensuring a harmonious realm, being revered as truth-seekers



Emberpage Diaspora

Drive: Reclaim homeland, preserve their tales, resist control

Incentive: Return to ancestral lands, keep their stories alive, be free



Resolve





CHARACTER STANDEES

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The Ashenfolio

Drive: Gain dominance, control narratives, amass power

Incentive: Reign supreme, control the narrative, be the dominant force

Tomeguard Territories

Drive: Live in peace, uphold individual freedom, sustain lands

Incentive: Maintain independence, protect personal spaces, harvest riches



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Game Objective:

01

Collect 5 Grand Archive Shards by solving citation challenges to win the game

Setup:

Choose a character, receive 3 citation cards and decide on the citation style (APA, MLA, etc.)









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For any scribe, mage, or avid writer, the Instant Inkwell is not just a tool but a testament to Taleterra's blend of magic and practicality. "WARNING: While the ink is non-toxic, consuming it may have odd effects. Keep away from children or small animals.

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Gameplay:

Travel between environment cards / Arrange citation tokens in the correct sequence to solve challenges and earn shards

HOW TO PLAY

GAME OUTCOMES

RECOGNISING CITATION STYLES: Teach players how to identify and apply the rules of the three citation styles (Harvard, APA, and Footnote) in a variety of academic contexts.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROMOTION: Develop an understanding of plagiarism, proper attribution, and the ethical principles that guide academic writing.

IMPROVING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: Improve players' ability to evaluate and synthesise information from a variety of sources, while also recognising the relevance and credibility of academic literature.

IMPROVING RESEARCH CAPABILITIES: Improve players' skills in locating, interpreting, and utilising academic papers, as well as to foster effective research strategies and information literacy.

PROMOTING COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: Promote collaborative problem-solving and peer learning while also developing teamwork and communication skills in an academic setting.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION: Allow players to apply their theoretical knowledge of citation styles to real-world academic papers, bridging the gap between theory and practise.

ENCOURAGING SELF-ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION: Encourage self-assessment and continuous improvement in scholarly endeavours by facilitating reflection on players' academic writing skills.







FINAL THOUGHTS

Our game can help students learn different citation and reference styles in a fun and interactive way. In a facilitated learning environment, the game can **reinforce** proper citation and improve students' practical skills. The game also includes referencing and citation decision-making challenges to encourage **critical thinking** and **problem-solving**. Students can, moreover, learn how to properly cite and reference sources by playing the game together. The bottom line is that a game combines intrinsic motivation, hands-on experience, and social engagement to help students **master academic integrity**. Combining gaming with academic skills can help students become more proficient and confident in citing and referencing sources. In conclusion, this project showcases the integration of agile design, educational design, and design science research (DSR) to create CiteSaga, a serious game focused on teaching citation and referencing. This approach, combined with AI tools like Fotor for rapid prototyping, highlights forward-thinking in educational game design. CiteSaga addresses a critical gap in teaching citation skills while setting a foundation for future research on the game's long-term impact, scalability, AI-enhanced features, and potential for collaborative learning. These directions will further validate its effectiveness and expand its role in educational technology.





ECGBL - 4 OCTOBER 2024



FOR LISTENING!

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