

# Custom content solutions

By [Andrew Hibling](#), issued by [EDGE Education](#)

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Here's a prediction: as we progress deeper into the 21st century, the traditional dance between academic publisher and educational institution will be disrupted. In a shift accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, institutions are beginning to take greater cognisance of the value of academic content, and affordances of digitisation are empowering educational institutions to take greater responsibility for, and ownership of, this content.



Andrew Hibling

When students arrive on campus to take on the daunting world of higher education, they are introduced to the courses that will make up their first semester. For each of these courses, students are provided with a course outline that describes the prescribed materials, lectures, tutorials and practicals that they will be engaging with, as well as important dates for assessments and other course milestones. Here, the role of the academic publisher has traditionally been to supply the prescribed and reference materials (i.e. the content) in the form of textbooks, readers and journals, while the educational institution has assumed responsibility for the rest of the educational experience (i.e. lectures, tutorials, etc.). However, this long-established relationship is beginning to shift.

## Engaging, fit-for-purpose content

An institution's teaching and learning strategy, and the delivery thereof, is a key factor in determining not only the strategy's pedigree, but also student engagement and success (Kinzie et al., 2017: 199). As such, higher education institutions are increasingly starting to invest in their students' content experience. While digitisation has resulted in an overabundance of content that can be accessed by students at the click of a button, research indicates that increased access to content does not necessarily translate to increased student engagement (Kao, 2021). Instead, in order for deep and meaningful learning to occur, a *fit-for-purpose* and *engaging* content base is crucial.



For content to be engaging, it needs to address all of the aspects of epistemological access. In other words, the content should:

- be easy to use and navigate;
- be pitched and scaffolded appropriately;

- be locally relevant;
- incorporate signalling and chunking, so as to reduce cognitive load (Mayer, 2014);
- be interactive and multimedia-rich;
- promote the application and integration of knowledge (Merrill, 2002);
- be rigorously reviewed and quality-assured; and
- promote inquiry and allow for collaboration and feedback from peers and educators (Garrison, 2017).

Yet, in a world where educational material is abundant, finding content that meets these criteria can present a challenge.

### **Introducing EDGE's custom content solutions**

EDGE Education is an educational content creation company at its core, with its genesis in traditional publishing. At EDGE, we know how to create content – be it in the form of textbooks, e-books or [CourseBooks™](#) (our flagship product). We've been doing it for ourselves for years, and now we're doing it for you.

Traditionally, EDGE would publish a textbook, educators would prescribe it, and students would procure it. Today, we offer an alternative solution, where the educational content that we produce is co-created with the institution and their educators, and customised to the learning outcomes of the institution's course or programme. This content can be a modification of one of EDGE's existing textbooks, e-books or CourseBooks™, or it can be the institution's own content, which is put through EDGE's academic publishing processes. Alternatively, it can be brand-new content that is owned by the institution and custom-made to suit its needs.

We work hand in hand with key educators from the institution to:

- review your outcomes;
- create a fit-for-purpose outline;
- harvest any existing content that they may have;
- augment existing content with new content;
- put the content through our professional content development and publishing processes; and
- deliver the content directly inside the institution's own learning management system (LMS), or through EDGE's CourseBook™ platform, which integrates into the institution's LMS through the Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) protocol.

In collaboration with EDGE Education, UCT Medical School's Department of Pathology has produced nine customised CourseBooks™ for disciplines such as Virology, Immunology, Microbiology and Genetics. The content belongs to UCT (i.e. it is owned by the institution) – EDGE simply helps to create and manage that content, and to deliver it through the CourseBooks™ platform that integrates into UCT's LMS.

North-West University (NWU), in collaboration with EDGE, has produced five short courses, including [Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Teachers](#) and [Victimology: A Psychosocial-legal Perspective](#). The learning design and content was co-created from scratch, and then put through EDGE's rigorous content creation process and delivered directly in NWU's LMS.

EDGE's goal is to ensure that public and private institutions in higher and professional education are able to meet their surging demand for educational content. If you would like us to assist you or your institution in developing engaging, fit-for-purpose content, please email us at [info@edgeeducation.com](mailto:info@edgeeducation.com).

### **References:**

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## ABOUT ANDREW HIBLING

Dr Andrew Hibling is the CEO of EDGE Education. Hibling received his MBChB from UCT, and also holds a Master of Philosophy in Inclusive Innovation from UCT's Graduate School of Business.

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