



HOW TO DEVELOP
your own
UNIQUE
ONLINE COURSE

(Even when others are teaching
on the same topic!)



Hey there, Course Builder!

Are you a would-be course builder stalled on the threshold of course creation because of the worry that everyone else has already taught on your topic?

Or maybe you're ready to start work despite knowing this--and yet you still need support, ideas, and confirmation that it's OK to go where others have already gone.

I'm here to tell you this: Others teaching on your topic is OK. In fact, it can be great! Others in the space you want to occupy means there's interest in your topic.

Now it's up to you to enter and offer up a course that only you could teach. Being successful in teaching online--whether you've got 2 competitors or 200--is always going to be easier when you find your tribe and then teach in the style that first attracted that tribe.

OK, you've heard that. And you believe it.

So now you need to know how that kind of teaching is done. . .

You need a roadmap! And I've got it for you.



1. Your unique course content starts with your unique talents

Examine your talents and skills from multiple angles and distances.

Your best course topic will make a promise to your audience: a promise that they will come out of your class transformed, newly capable. Perhaps they'll be adept at making info graphics, or newly able to live debt free, or skilled at designing their own needlepoint patterns.

Whatever the promise is that you make, it should pull on your special talents and provide a learning path that could only come from you.

To develop this path, understand that there are multiple facets to your talents. Your style, beliefs, habits, and special approaches all impact how you do what you do. What's more they should be a part of how you **teach** what you do.

In business terms, this step of examining your talents is the work of defining your "unique selling proposition" or USP. It's your "special sauce," your superpower.

To uncover your USP, look at your skills, talents, and interests from nine angles or "lenses" that I list below.

Picture a second you moving around the first you--with a magnifying glass, perhaps--and taking a look at what you know and can do from multiple angles and distances. Take time to consider each angle, and brainstorm the specific course topics you could offer--and the specific teaching approaches you could take.

I've listed the nine angles below, but be



sure to [CLICK HERE](#) for a workbook with a more detailed guide to these **9 angles**.

The angles you'll work through:

1. When are you in a state of flow?
2. Have you mastered a tool?
3. What are you skilled at?
4. What can you DIY?
5. What have you studied? What specialist knowledge do you have?
6. Can you bring experts together?
7. Are you able to motivate others to conquer challenges?
8. Do you have beliefs or practices others aspire to?
9. Do you have a signature system?

So open that workbook, and consider skills and tools you've mastered, projects you've completed, systems you've developed, how you best work with people--and more.

For example, you might be a hands-on how-to kind of teacher or you might be more of a coach or you might be best at community building. The angle on this that is yours has big implications for making your course uniquely yours.

Open the workbook and dig deeply into identifying your "special sauce."

2. Your unique content starts with what YOU know. It does not start with research. It does not start with someone else's table of contents or course outline.

Start creating content with what YOU know.

When it comes to creating your online course—and making the lessons in it, I want you to resist the urge to start developing your lesson by doing research. I know sometimes it can feel like an easy way to prime the pump and get going with your lesson creation . . . but start, instead, with what you do and what you know.

It's really OK. You do not need to go see what others have said the right answer or approach is. You do not need a review of principles and concepts from the experts at this point.

Start instead with what you already know and how you do the thing you're going to teach! Let that knowledge and your own original perspective and preferences shape your lesson.

if you do research first, that research may well be what you use to define your content sequencing, emphasis and even meaning.

And then your fresh perspective is gone.

So save it for after you've gotten your own ideas into place.

Does this sound a little scary?

I get that, and I've got . . .

. . . First steps for you to take to develop your raw ideas:

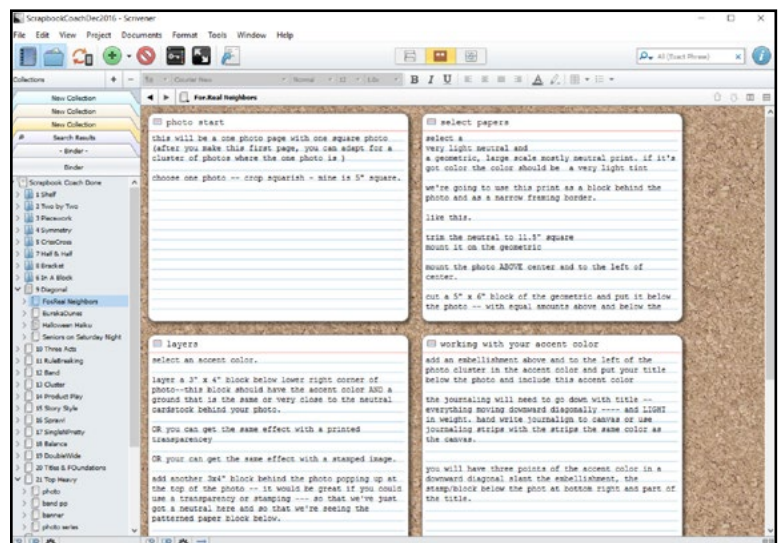
1. Choose a piece of content to work on and set aside 40 minutes for it.
2. Open some kind of text document (I've got suggestions below for tools that work well at this point). It's important that you commit ideas to paper (or to a digital document). In your head, these are IDEAS. On paper they are the beginnings of content you can shape and share.
3. Have faith that even though you don't know the shape and contents of the final product, it will emerge when you just start and spend time on the work.

4. Add your ideas to the document. Develop the one that compels you right now. As you get other ideas, make quick notes that you can move to when you've finished this work--or when you just get stuck on this work. This isn't a linear process right now. Rather it's a process of inventory and development which often means circling through the pieces.
5. Work in chunks. Right now you're recording and beginning to shape raw ideas. You don't necessarily know sequencing or even emphasis.
6. It's OK to stop work at the end of 40 minutes.
7. Schedule your next 40 minute work time.

Use a development tool that lets you work in “chunks” that you can easily rearrange.

My personal favorite for this work right now is Scapple. But I also use Scrivener, OneNote, and AirStory depending on the project.

The top image here is Scrivener's Cork Board view which I use to storyboard scrapbook projects I teach at Get It Scrapped. The bottom image is Scapple which I use to develop scripts for my slide show lessons at Teach What You Do.



DEVELOPMENT TOOLS TO CHECK OUT

- [Scapple](#)
- [Scrivener](#)
- [AirStory](#)
- [OneNote](#)

<p>DESCRIBE PROBLEM Describe your customer's situation/problem/frustration and identify with it.</p> <p>Paint a picture of their pain or problem or desire.</p> <p>Consider your prospects' frustrations and desires.</p> <p>"If you're reading this page, chances are . . ."</p> <p>You know that feeling you get when Monday rolls around and you have to go back to work?</p> <p>Running a wedding photography business is stressful work - you are on the hook for capturing one of your client's single most important (and expensive!) days. But if you do it right, wedding photography is also a whole lot of fun.</p> <p>When was the last time you finished your coffee before it got cold? Or managed to get regular exercise that wasn't chasing a two year old up and down your hallway? When did you last just sit quietly and do . . . nothing?</p>	<p>AMPLIFY OR AGITATE THE PROBLEM Keep going with where they are probably at (agitate the problem)</p> <p>EMPATHIZE & SHARE SPECIFICS ABOUT THE SITUATION Right? I get it because I've been there, too. I'm XXX and I'm glad you're here.</p> <p>Does this sound familiar? When it comes to XYZ, you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stuck at - overwhelmed by - unsure of - tired of <p>You want to get better at this because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you know - you realize - you need - you understand (THE PAY OFF) <p>OR maybe you just (insert something fun and light)</p> <p>If any of the above describe YOU, stay with me here</p>	<p>OFFER SOLUTION I've got a solution for all this! It's called "Your Class name" and it will help you achieve a state of being/make a website/reach the point that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this good thing happens - as well as this good thing - and this other good thing 	<p>BENEFITS When these good things happen here's what the result is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less stress, frustration, overwhelm, whatever your customer is avoiding - more time, money, well-being, whatever your customer is seeking 	<p>TESTIMONIAL You don't have to take my word for it! There's nothing more convincing to your prospects than testimonials. As the people who've worked with you to speak to your course success. First time out with the course? Have you done related work that people could speak to. Do not represent, but see if there are illustrations that you could use. Testimonials prove your claims.</p>
<p>design in service of this story and your offering. use photos and images but make sure they are the right ones. A peek at your class, a peek at life with the problem solved. Use product photos.</p> <p>no website header, navigation or sidebar. a landing page.</p> <p>if you want to design in rows and modules, use a page builder or landing page builder. Its not necessary, though. The more important aspect is that you remove</p>				<p>WHAT ORDER? title describe problem amplify or agitate problem and empathize offer solution benefits testimonials features bonuses offer and call to action including scarcity guarantee address objections (FAQs) who this course is for</p>

3. Your unique content has a “signature” framework.

Deconstruct YOUR systems and processes. Then, as you put them back together, define your own signature framework.

Whatever it is that you teach, take a close look at how you do that thing that you’re teaching.

This will usually mean going through and actually doing the work you want your students to complete. Make a project or execute on an implementation yourself. From scratch.

As you do this, break your process and approach down into elemental pieces. Pay attention to:

- **Key Pieces.**
What do you call them, How can they be grouped? What are important aspects of them?
- **Crossroads.**
These are places where students will make choices that may vary from the ones you’d make. How can you give them supports for these choices?
- **Underlying Principles and Concepts.**
What are the reasons you make particular choices at crossroads?

SIGNATURE FRAMEWORK EXAMPLES

Get It Scrapped (GIS)

Ten years ago, at Get It Scrapped, I developed the “Page Parts + Design Principles” framework for making well designed scrapbook pages efficiently. This framework is key to the GIS blog content organization, the sequence and content of classes within the membership, and it underlies almost every lesson we teach.

Teach What You Do (TWYD)

At TWYD, I’ve developed key frameworks that include:

> A “6 Step Process to Course Design, Creation and Launch.” My flagship course is built around this framework, and free content always relates to one of the 6 steps.

> The “4 Course Drivers” is a framework my students use in the beginning to develop and evaluate the viability of a course topic. Once the course topic is set, they use these drivers to design key aspects of their course (scope, audience, and formats).

This framework is at the core of a key grid-styled worksheet students use in their work.

> A framework of 4 teaching approaches I’ve defined is key to the course development lessons I provide my students.

All of these came out of my deconstruction of my own unique processes for online course development.

Are there principles and concepts that are a given for your topic or industry that your students need to know about? What are the important ones? Is there a hierarchy? Are there rules you have for applying them?

- **Pathways.**

What are the steps and sequences that matter for your students? What's your special approach to them?

Now put these into a framework for teaching that makes sense for your students to achieve their goal with your class.

A framework--with steps, key elements and processes, and decision-making rules they can rely on--gives students a pathway to accomplishment.

When that framework is uniquely yours, no one else can teach the way you're teaching.

4. Your unique course has assignments and “roadmaps” that support your signature teaching framework.

Design practice and implementation opportunities as well as checklists, quick guides, worksheets and other “roadmaps” that empower your students to use your signature framework well.

An effective online course will supplement lecture and demo teaching with specific assignments and guides to the work. Don't let these pieces of your teaching be afterthoughts. Rather, make sure they are integrated to support your unique framework.

Practice and Implementation. For each lesson you create, think through the practice or implementation your students should do to gain skills and make progress. What's more, though, think about the framework you've presented and create these assignments to match up to that framework.

Roadmaps. For each lesson you create, consider the checklists, quick guides, cheatsheets, workbooks, and supports that will enable your students to recall and put the framework you've presented to work well. Develop these roadmaps with your framework in mind.

DEFINE YOUR COURSE TOPIC

	WHAT YOU OFFER		WHO YOU OFFER IT TO		HOW YOU DELIVER IT		
	topic	scope	niche	level of expertise	medium	touch	pace
talent	✓						
audience	✓						
portfolio		✓					
market							

Mod 1 | Lesson 6 | Evaluate Your Course Topic

	WHAT TO OFFER		WHO TO OFFER IT TO		HOW TO DELIVER		
	topic	scope	niche	expertise	medium	touch	pace
TALENTS							
AUDIENCE							
PORTFOLIO							
MARKET							

EXAMPLE (shown at right)

The teaching slide shown here is accompanied by a worksheet that gives the students a guide for working through questions presented in the lesson. NOTE: This content is the “4 Course Drivers” framework I described in the previous example here.

MOTIVATED & EFFICIENT SCRAPBOOKER

Scrapbook Shortcuts Checklist (page 1 of 2)

Check off the ones you'd like to use and add your own ideas.

<p>photos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep printed photos on hand <input type="checkbox"/> Convert photos to black and white to save time on selecting product to go with them <input type="checkbox"/> Reuse photos you love that are already edited <input type="checkbox"/> When you've got lots of photos, choose the best one or two or three shots quickly and trust your first instincts <input type="checkbox"/> Print a block of photos together <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange photos in vertical or horizontal series -- all same-sized 	<p>journaling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Handwrite <input type="checkbox"/> Use list journaling <input type="checkbox"/> Use journaling from your social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram) <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quote, poem or lyrics <input type="checkbox"/> Add journaling to open space in a photo and print the two together <input type="checkbox"/> Use journaling prompts 	<p>titles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use pre-printed label or tag <input type="checkbox"/> Use printed font title instead of alphas <input type="checkbox"/> Have a short list of best fonts for titework <input type="checkbox"/> Use embellishments with words/wordart <input type="checkbox"/> Can't think of a title? Use a simple label of activity, place or subject name <input type="checkbox"/> Take it from your journaling - emphasizing title words with size and color and perhaps a different font <input type="checkbox"/> Skip the title <input type="checkbox"/> Add title to photo and print the two together
<p>other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>embellishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use non-themed, classic embellishments like buttons and ribbons <input type="checkbox"/> Use minimal embellishing <input type="checkbox"/> Let title double as embellishment <input type="checkbox"/> Embellish with grid of patterned paper blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Embellish with shapes punched from patterned paper <input type="checkbox"/> Embellish with strips of patterned paper or ribbon <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-make embellishment clusters (esp stacked) <input type="checkbox"/> Master the visual triangle for embellishment placement and use it again and again <input type="checkbox"/> Embellish with an alpha as monogram 	

EXAMPLE (shown at left)

At Get It Scrapped, “Page Parts” are key to our frameworks. Here's a “fast starts” checklist for quicker scrapbooking. It is structured to include page parts as the key decision points for speedier work.

Put it to work for yourself!

These are the 4 steps you just received for developing your own unique course--even when others are teaching in your field:

1. Examine your talents and skills from multiple angles and distances.
2. Start creating content with what YOU know.
3. Deconstruct YOUR systems and processes. Then, as you put them back together, define your own signature framework.
4. Design practice and implementation opportunities as well as checklists, quick guides, worksheets and other “roadmaps” that empower your students to use your signature framework well.

Talk about it over in our Facebook Group: Prep School for Online Course Builders.

I'd love to hear about what you're working on--and introduce you to the many course builders over in our community. [Click here to request access.](#) I'll get you in as soon as possible.

Look for my invite.

As you realize the power of your own signature approach to teaching, you'll be ready to turn it into online lessons in your own online classroom.

, . Keep an eye out from an email from me with an invite to my free course-building master class: 6 Steps to Build a Profitable Online Teaching Business.

I'll be in touch soon! Be sure to let me know if you have any questions at <http://teachwhatyoudo.com/contact> .