



HOW TO GET
your online
COURSE
CONTENT
ACTUALLY CREATED

(Yes, I know it's tough
to wrangle ideas into lessons!)



Are you ready to get your course content really and truly created?

Creating course content means shaping your ideas and experiences into lessons that get your students to their goals.

This work can be a little bit like herding cats. The thought of all those pieces needing to be expressed and organized and presented can be overwhelming. And that thought can prevent you from sitting down to get the work done.

This work takes focus. It also benefits from a process for moving from idea to lesson. And—just as importantly—it requires the will and self-discipline to get this work done.

I've created over 100 courses and I STILL stop on the threshold of getting down to the real work.

While I love outlining the course and coming up with creative assignments and projects—when it comes to expressing those ideas in an individual lesson so that they can then be put into a script or storyboard or slide deck takes creative work—and that's the kind of work that stalls many of us. Give us a list of mechanical tasks, and we can dig in. But transforming and expressing ideas takes both faith in the process and a will to get started with the process

In this guide, you'll get:

- Part 1. A three stage content development process
- A deep dive into the stage one work (when ideas are especially raw)
- Part 2. How-to for asset and task management
- Part 3. Final advice for using these structures to get the work done



PART 1. 3 STAGES OF LESSON CONTENT CREATION

Here is a framework for thinking about the work of lesson creation.

Often course creators merge these stages, but when you understand and use these stages and this process, it will enable you to not only create solid and quality content, it will also give you the tasks to put on your checklist. When the work is broken down this way, you know what steps to take. These are steps that build one on the other, steps that make getting the work done possible.

When you don't know where to start or cannot gather the will to start or just feel overwhelmed by the task of "herding your cats," turn to this structure and take it piece by piece.

Batch the work of each stage for related lessons

You'll benefit from working through stage 1 for all related lessons at the same time. And that's because, during this phase you may realize you want to move ideas to different lessons, and you may realize you need to delete or add more content.

Batching up the stage 2 and stage 3 work for multiple lessons

3 LESSON DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Stages 1 and 2 are lesson development work.

Stage 3 is production.

In Stage 1 you move the ideas and experience you possess into detailed notes that are sequenced and arranged in a teachable framework.

In Stage 2, you move these notes (or this draft) into a production-ready tool, for example, a teleprompter script, slides with notes, a storyboard demo with staged project, or text formatted for eBook layout.

In Stage 3, use your production ready tool and produce your lesson. This might mean recording a video, laying out an ebook, film the creation of a project, or even delivering your course live. Check out two examples of this, one on my scrapbooking education website [Get It Scrapped](#) and one at [Teach What You Do](#).

will make you more efficient, give you consistent and reliable quality, and make it possible to outsource some of the work.

For example, in stage 2, when you know your notes from stage 1 are solid, you could give an assistant instructions for slide creation or eBook layout. In stage 3 you could do initial recording of a video and have an assistant edit and render the videos, or perhaps create audios or even add content to the classroom

Here are more details about each stage.

Stage 1. From idea to framework and refined notes

This is the work you do as you start to make your complete lesson.

When you outlined your entire course, you would have named this lesson. You would have listed principles and how-tos and exercises you think will fit here. You would have written a description of what this lesson contributes to your students' progress toward their larger course goal.

Your work now is to flesh all that out, to determine exactly what does belong, how you'll weave lecture and demo, which concepts are key, how you'll illustrate with example and story. Everything needs to come together in one unified chunk of your class: a complete lesson.

Stage 2. From notes to production-ready tool

When your ideas for the lesson have been fleshed out, sequenced and built into a framework, you now need to create your production-ready tool.

That tool will vary based up on the kind of course you're teaching and the format you're producing it in.

If you're making an ebook, you'll be editing, adding headers and sub-headers that make your framework clear, developing illustrations to accompany your text, adding sidebar content.

If you're making a narrated-slide video lesson, you'll be creating slides and putting your script in the notes areas of the slides.

If you're planning to demonstrate a project or process, you'll be creating a storyboard of the material you plan to cover, and you'll be staging the project for creation during the recording of the lesson.

If you're teaching live you'll be developing what you need for support during the live session. It might be a detailed outline, slides, web-pages, a teleprompter-ready script.

While I suggested batching this work, for the first one or two lessons, you might work straight through and even record or produce so that you can see if you like the way the final produced lesson looks.

With the first couple of lessons, develop (or refining) your templates and process. This is when you see what really works best – and then replicate.

Stage 3 . Production

When you put systems in place for production, this work can be the downhill glide at the end of your course creation.

Batch this work up. Use templates, naming and process conventions, and GET IT DONE! Give yourself time for the first couple of lessons you're producing to refine the templates and processes.

Develop and use templates. If you're making an ebook or worksheet create document templates with logo, color, image and text styles, and master pages that have headers or footers set up.

If you're making videos, your template will hold intro and/or outro graphics and music as well as your preferred callout formatting and transitions or special effects you will use repeatedly.

Document processes. Document the process for this step of lesson making. While it seems obvious how to do things when you're in the midst of work, you'll be glad to have stepped out instructions for things like style settings for a document or microphone settings for a recording.

Be brief but clear and complete. Include details that will remind you to output an audio version of a video while you've got the editor open. Same thing with outputting a pdf of slides for students while you've got them open. Remind yourself where to upload them onto the internet and how to connect them in the classroom.

When you've got this documentation, you don't despair to realize you need to do one more lesson. And this makes it possible to outsource work.

STAGE 1 DEEP DIVE: DEVELOPING LESSONS WHEN IDEAS ARE ESPECIALLY RAW

This work entails getting your ideas roughed out, sequenced and shaped into an effective framework.

When you do this work, use a tool that lets you easily work with several ideas, break them into chunks, and move them around visually for sequencing and for building a framework around.

If you're someone who thinks linearly--and/or if you have a short and simple class that doesn't require substantial interweaving of concepts, demo, and illustration--you might simply work a text document in outline format and type in your ideas.

For most of us, though, it won't be that easy. You'll be able to present even complex ideas more clearly if you use a development tool that lets you work with chunks of writing that can visually organized and moved around.

My best suggestions for this work are Scapple (by Literature and Lattie) and OneNote (by Microsoft). That's because both of these let you create multiple blocks of text on an empty page. The width and height of these blocks is adjustable and they can be dragged around the work area.

The benefit of Scapple is that the blocks can be color coded and even connected with arrows. You'll create and save one document for each lesson you're working on.

The benefit of OneNote is that you can create all of your lesson and class content within one "notebook," opening tabs and sections and even subsections to organize your ideas in a hierarchical way that can match your course lesson and module structure.

See an example of my work with raw ideas on the next page.

EXAMPLE USING SCAPPLE (by Literature & Latte)

These are my initial notes for this quick guide you're currently reading. I added initial ideas to text boxes as they occurred to me.

ExecutionNotes - Scapple
File Edit View Notes Format Window Help

HELP WITH EXECUTION
How to get your online course content created. (Yes, I know it's tough to wrangle ideas into lessons!)

TOOLS/WORK ENVIRONMENT
Give yourself a blank whiteboard (unless you like an outline and can think linearly)

DEVELOPMENT =/ PRODUCTION
Separate development and production. Wrangling the ideas and then creating the presentation ready tool: a script, an eBook transcript, a storyboard for a demo or live presentation.

SCHEDULE THE WORK
Schedule time to create content. Don't leave it open ended. And, while you might sometimes devote a day to content creation -- don't make that a habit. Instead schedule shorter times more regularly. When you've got that limited time and you want to have something to show for it, you'll get to work. Sometimes a big old work day can meander around the real work for ours.

ALL PHASES/TASKS
Creating and selling an online course is a project with many tasks.
DEVELOP YOUR COURSE TOPIC/OFFERING
Inventory your teachable talents
Research audience needs
Review competitors and identify positioning opportunities
Develop this course topic with your complete portfolio in mind
Evaluate and define course topic
DESIGN YOUR COURSE
Outline your course
Price your course
Name and Brand Your Course
BUILD YOUR AUDIENCE
Set up audiences and website pixels so you can market to prospects online (esp in Facebook)
Create first lead magnet
Set up email list and opt-in for first lead magnet
Develop 12 week brand awareness plan
Develop 12 week audience nurture plan
Execute weekly on audience building, list building, and nurture
CREATE YOUR COURSE
Design lesson structure or arc
Set up file folder organization
Create templates
Create production schedule
Develop lesson content

INTRO
Creating your course content means shaping the ideas and experiences you have into lessons that get your students to their goal.
This work can be a little bit like herding cats: all those pieces needing to be expressed and organized and presented deftly easy...? arrangement?
This work takes focus. It also benefits from a process for moving from idea to lesson. And—just as importantly—it requires the will and self-discipline to get this work done.
I've created over 100 courses and I STILL stop of the threshold of getting down to the real work. While I love outlining the course and coming up with creative assignments and projects—when it comes to putting those ideas into a script or draft or storyboard
Partly I know this will be hard work and I've got to gather my will to get it done.

PLAN THIS PROJECT
Plan out this project. From your course outline make a list of the lessons you'll be creating. Use some form of to-do list or project management tool to make a list of all that needs to be done.
And then come up with a schedule of completions for it.
Chunk it down. Know what you're doing.

DAILY PRACTICE
Look to your project to-do
Keep a work log of accomplishments
Know what you're doing when you next come back

BATCH THE PRODUCTION AND GET HELP IF NEEDED
Templates. Processes. Saves time — also you'll have a better class if you do the development all of one piece

MANAGE THE COURSE ASSETS
Keep track of all the pieces—all the lesson assets. Set up your

I continued shaping the ideas, writing more moving and combining and adding pieces until it look like as below. And then I transferred my writing to InDesign where I created the document you're now viewing.

ExecutionNotes - Scapple
File Edit View Notes Format Window Help

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3 STAGES OF LESSON CONTENT CREATION
Here is a framework for thinking about the work of lesson creation: three stages that all of my lesson content passes through.
Often course creators merge these stages, but when you understand this process, it will enable you to not only create solid and quality content, it will also give you the tasks to put on your checklist. Yes, the tasks require creative and sometimes difficult work, but they are steps to get through, steps that build one on the other, steps that make getting the work done possible.
When you don't know where to start or can't gather the will to start or just feel overwhelmed by the task of "herding your cats," turn to this structure and take it piece by piece.
After I present these stages, I'll also share processes and tools for doing the work described here.
SIDEBAR START—
Stages 1 and 2 are lesson development work. Stage 3 is production.
In Stage 1 you move the ideas and experience you possess into detailed notes that are sequenced and arranged in a teachable framework.
In Stage 2, you move these notes (or this draft) into a production-ready tool, for example, a teleprompter script, slides with notes, a storyboard demo with staged project, or text formatted for eBook layout

STAGE 1 DEEP DIVE. Developing ideas into a lesson
This work entails getting into ideas roughed out, sequenced and shaped into an effective framework.
When you do this work, use a tool that lets you easily work with several ideas, break them into chunks, and move them around visually for sequencing and for building a framework around.
If you're someone who thinks linearly and if you have a short and simple class that doesn't require substantial interweaving of concepts, demo, and illustration, you might simply work with a text document in outline format and type in your ideas.
For most of us, though, it won't be that easy. You'll be able to present even complex ideas more clearly if you use a development tool that lets you work with chunks of writing that can visually organized and moved around.
My best suggestions for this work are Scapple (by Literature and Latte) and OneNote (by Microsoft). That's because both of these let you create multiple blocks of text on an empty page. The width and

ASSET & TASK MANAGEMENT
There can be lots of pieces to an online course. Of course this will vary depend upon course size. Even a simple course with a few lessons will benefit from time and asset management both during creation and later on in delivery.
This is the work of planning your modules and lessons and all the "assets" you'll be making for each. Set up to-do lists and a system for storing, referencing and accessing all these pieces.
List your assets
With your detailed course outline in hand, make a first list of all lessons. If you've got a large, more complex class with lessons arranged into modules, list things out to show this hierarchical organization.
Now get really detailed—but know that things can change. You may edit this list and the plan for it. That's OK. This gives you a plan to start with and edit as needed.
List your modules and lessons. Then within each lesson, list the pieces you plan to make.
List your tasks
In a separate list, break out each lesson and list the tasks that will need to be completed.
See an example of a simple class I taught at Get It Scrapped in the sidebar. Each lesson has a short eBook, video, live webinar, and webinar recording. See how that translates to assets and tasks on the to-do list.
For a more complex class, like the Teach What You Do eCourse Blueprint, the list is bigger. There are 6 modules and 35 lessons spread across these modules. Every lesson has a video at its core, and the supplemental pieces include transcript, audio version, and workbook.

SIMPLE 5 LESSON CLASS AT GET IT SCRAPPED, MY SCRAPBOOKING EDUCATION CLASSROOM
CLASS: VISUAL STORYTELLING
ASSET LIST
Every lesson has the same 4 pieces. I'll show you lessons 1 and 2 here. Notice that these assets are all listed in their digital formats. An ebook or workbook is in PDF format. A video is in MP4. If I had audios, they would be MP3s (or the newer M4V).
Lesson 1. Elements of Story and Tools for Visual Storytelling
> PDF workbook lesson
> MP4 video lesson
> LINK to attend live webinar on Monday, June 6
> MP4 recording of webinar
> Lesson page in classroom
... repeats for each lesson
TASK (TO-DO) LIST
These are the actual tasks for creating the course assets and making them available to students.
For every lesson, I'll need to develop the content and then prepare two different production-ready tools: a PDF eBook and an MP4 video.
Here are my steps for lesson 1. They will repeat for each lesson. Notice that these reflect how I work. For the eBook, stages 2 and 3 combine for me. And then for the video, I separate stages 2 and 3.
All Lessons
These are tasks that I do as I create the

GET IT DONE
Use the 3 content creation stages into manageable tasks
I started this lesson with a description of content creation stages. These set your work down into tasks that can be done in daily chunks of time.
You're more likely to sit down to accomplish when you know when that work can be done in daily chunks of time.
Use these three stages to guide for it.
Schedule and track the work
Be sure to schedule time to create open ended. Don't give yourself CREATE.
Instead, schedule 2 to 5 tasks per can accomplish.
Consider that, in addition to the master task-to-do list, you could Record the major tasks you accomplish you accountable and feel accomplished
I use Asana for my work schedule management
There is a big to-do list for each But I also have a simpler project Today." In it are columns for > Work Log > Do today > On Deck Get It Scrapped (online) > On Deck Teach What You Do > On Deck Personal
Each day, I put the tasks I plan to do in the Today" column. I can see upon Deck" columns. Much of that work projects, I find this easier than s

PART 2. ASSET & TASK MANAGEMENT

There can be lots of pieces to an online course. Of course this will vary depending upon course size. Even a simple course with a few lessons will benefit from time and asset management both during creation and later on in delivery.

This is the work of planning your modules and lessons and all the “assets” you’ll be making for each. Set up to-do lists and a system for storing, referencing and accessing all these pieces.

List Your Assets

With your detailed course outline in hand, make a first list of all lessons. If you’ve got a large, more complex class with lessons arranged into modules, list things out to show this hierarchical organization.

Now get really detailed—but know that things can change. You may edit this

EXAMPLE: ASSETS & TASKS IN A SIMPLE 5 LESSON CLASS AT GET IT SCRAPPED:

EXAMPLE COURSE: VISUAL STORYTELLING

ASSET LIST

Every lesson has the same 4 pieces. I’ll show you lessons 1 and 2 here. Notice that these assets are all listed in their digital formats. An ebook or workbook is in PDF format. A video is in MP4. If I had audios, they would be MP3s (or the newer M4V).

Lesson 1. Elements of Story and Tools for Visual Storytelling

- PDF workbook lesson
- MP4 video lesson
- [LINK](#) to attend live webinar on Monday, June 6
- MP4 recording of webinar
- Lesson page in classroom
- ... repeats for each lesson

TASK (TO-DO) LIST

These are the actual tasks for creating the course assets and making them available to students.

For every lesson, I’ll need to develop the content and then prepare two different production-ready tools: a PDF eBook and an MP4 video.

Here are my steps for lesson 1. They will repeat for each lesson. Notice that these reflect how I work. For the eBook, stages 2 and 3 combine for me. And then for the video, I separate stages 2 and 3.

list and the plan for it. That's OK. This gives you a plan to start with and edit as needed.

List your modules and lessons. Then within each lesson, list the pieces you plan to make.

List Your Tasks

In a separate list, break out each lesson and list the tasks that will need to be completed.

See an example of a simple class I taught at Get It Scrapped in the sidebar. Each lesson has a short eBook, video, live webinar, and webinar recording. See how that translates to assets and tasks on the to-do list.

For a more complex class, like the Teach What You Do eCourse Blueprint, the list is bigger. There are 6 modules and 35 lessons spread across these modules. Every lesson has a video at its core, and the supplemental pieces include transcript, audio version, and workbook.

With these detailed to-do lists set up in my preferred project management tool, Asana, my assistant and I can track each others' work, requests, and task completion.

EXAMPLE (continued from previous page)

All Lessons

- These are tasks that I do as I create the first lesson.
- Create eBook template
- Create video template
- Create classroom page template

Lesson 1

- Develop lesson content (Stage 1)
- Edit and format content for eBook. Lay out and produce PDF (For me, stage 2 and 3 combine when I create an eBook.)
- Create slides and script from eBook (back to Stage 2)
- Record, edit, render video MP4 (stage 3)
- Set up classroom lesson page
- Upload PDF and MP4 and link up in classroom
- Schedule webinar. Add date, time, link to classroom
- Write email for Lesson 1
- ...repeats for each lesson

Use Organized Storage And File Naming Conventions

NOTE: Be sure to develop a naming convention for your files and the folders they are stored in that signifies business, course, module, and lesson numbers. Name and store all of your assets with this system.

For example in this course, Visual Storytelling at Get It Scrapped.

Files would be named as follows (GIS=Get It Scrapped)

GIS-VisualStorytelling-Lesson01.mp4 (video)

GIS-VisualStorytelling-Lesson01.pdf (eBook)

GIS-VisualStorytelling-Lesson01-FNameLname.mp4 (webinar interview)

I set up a folder called Visual Storytelling. Within it are folders for each lesson.

For a more complex class at Teach What You Do, I set up folders for each module. Within the module are folders for each lesson. All file names begin with TWYD for Teach What You Do.

PART 3. GET IT DONE

Use the 3 content creation stages to break your work into manageable tasks

I started this lesson with a description of three course content create stages. These stages enable you to break your work down into tasks that can be accomplished in daily chunks of time.

You're more likely to sit down to work and get tasks accomplished when you know what you need to do and when that work can be done in 1 to 3 hours.

Use these three stages to guide your work and your plans for it.

Schedule the work

Be sure to schedule time to create content. Don't leave it open ended. Don't give yourself the whole day to CREATE.

Instead, schedule 2 to 5 tasks per day that you know you can accomplish.

Once you've got a couple of lessons created, you'll have a sense of how to batch work: whether to be completing stage 1 work for several lessons together and then moving on to stages 2 and OR whether to work through all three stages lesson by lesson.

Log the work (and celebrate having done it)

Consider that, in addition to checking things off on the master task/todo list, you could keep a daily work log. Record the major tasks you accomplish each day. It will keep you accountable and feeling good about what you're accomplishing.

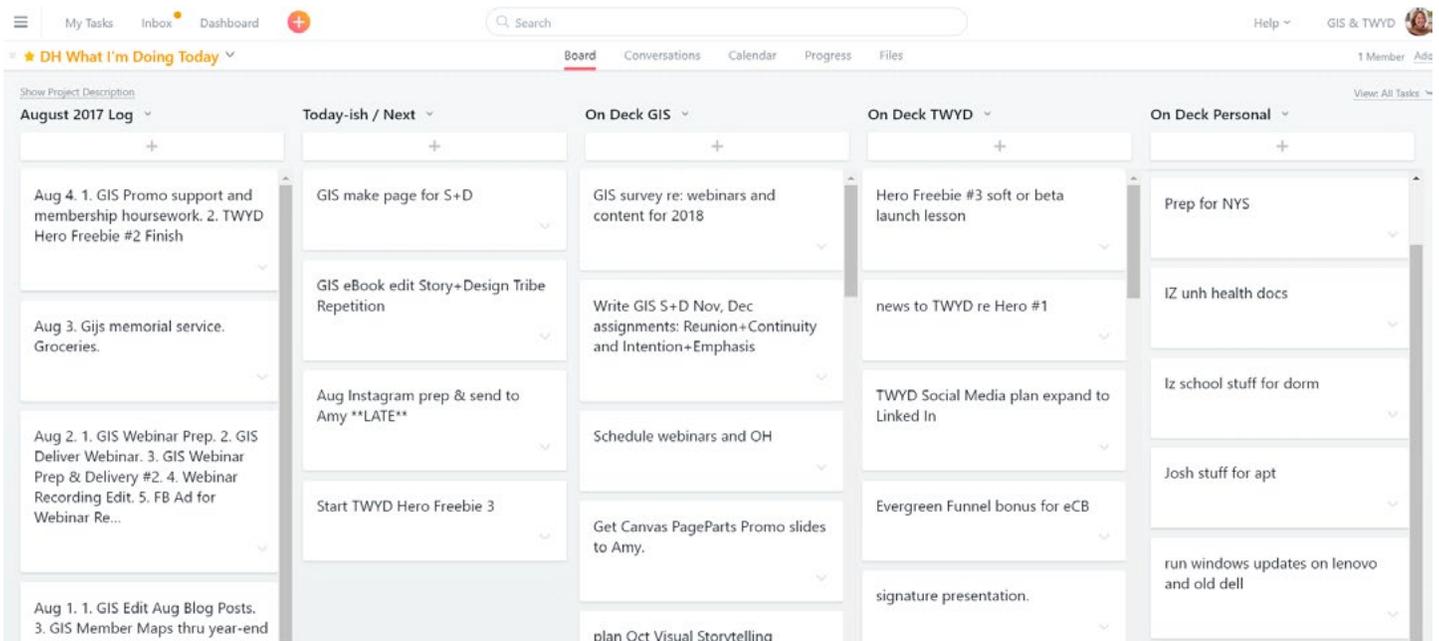
I use Asana for my work scheduling and project management.

There is a big to-do list for each course creation project. But I also have a simpler project called "What I'm Doing Today." In it are columns for:

- > Work Log
- > Do today
- > On Deck Get It Scrapped (one of my businesses)
- > On Deck Teach What You Do (my other business)
- > On Deck Personal

Each day, I put the tasks I plan to complete in the "Do Today" column. I can see upcoming work in the "On Deck" columns. Much of that work comes from detailed projects. I find this easier than seeing a BIG list of tasks with dates.

Most importantly though, each day I log th work I've accomplished. This way I'm accountable—and I see what I've done and that I am moving forward.



Put it to work for yourself!

To get your lesson content created:

- use a three stage content development process
- when ideas are very raw, work with small chunks of content that you can grow, sequence, and develop into a framework
- manage your tasks and assets
- schedule the work.

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 gain confidence and a process for turning your raw ideas into actual online course lessons, you'll be ready to create your own branded and positioned course delivered with an online classroom platform. What's more you'll be ready to build social audiences and a mailing list in preparation for a launch and class sales.

, . 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> .