

THE DOABLE COURSE CREATION METHOD



A practical guide to course creation

LISA OOSTHUIZEN

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This is your special code to access additional information that supplements the book wherever I refer to the reference page. You'll also find links to the programs/tools/apps I talk about in the book.

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Chapter One

Why this book

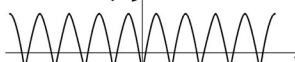
Does the thought of creating an online course overwhelm you?

You're not alone. It's very easy to get overwhelmed because there are so many moving parts involved in course creation. It's like a giant jigsaw puzzle without any corner pieces so you don't know where to start.

Not only do you have to come up with a course idea and build an outline of what you want to teach. You also have to figure out how to create the course content like video, audio and workbooks. Which often means figuring out tech you may not have used before. Then you need to figure out where to host it - and there are so many course hosting options that you can get stuck in analysis paralysis.

And of course, you want to do it well. You want to create a course that people enjoy. A course that helps people and a course that they'll refer to their friends and family. But because it seems so overwhelming, you're stuck at the idea stage and just can't seem to get started.

Well, I've got some good news for you.

$$\phi = BS \cos(Bt) \quad \Delta = k\lambda - \max \quad \omega_0 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{LC}} \quad T = 2\pi\sqrt{LC} \quad v = 2\pi Rn = \omega R$$


$$v = \sqrt{\frac{3kT}{m_0}} = \sqrt{\frac{3RT}{M}} \quad x = x_0 + v_0 t \quad S_x = x - x_0$$

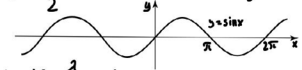
$$A = FS \cos \alpha \quad \omega = \frac{2\pi}{T} = 2\pi v \quad V = \sqrt{\frac{RTC_p}{\mu C_v}} \quad \rho V = vRT \quad h_{\max} = \frac{v_0^2}{2g} \quad a = \frac{v - \vec{v}_0}{t}$$

$$A = -F_{mp} S \quad V - V_0 = \beta V_0 (t - t_0) \quad E_k = \frac{mv_0^2}{2} = eU_s \quad v = \frac{m}{M} = \frac{N}{N_A} \quad v_\varphi = \frac{S}{t}$$

$$A = mgh \quad R = \frac{mv}{qB} \quad T = \frac{2\pi m}{qB} \quad m = \frac{m_0}{\sqrt{1-\beta^2}} \quad X_c = \frac{1}{\omega C} \quad t = \frac{t_0}{\sqrt{1-\beta^2}} \quad v_\varphi = \frac{v_0 + v}{2}$$

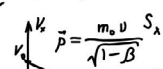
$$A = \frac{kx^2}{2} \quad Q = cm(t_2 - t_1) = U + A \quad S_y = h - h_0 = v_{0y}t + \frac{a_y t^2}{2} \quad v = \frac{v_0 + v}{2}$$

$$N = \frac{A}{t} \quad W = \frac{kq_1 q_2}{er} \quad \vec{E}_k = \frac{3}{2} kT \quad y = |\sin 2x| - 1 \quad X_L = \omega L \quad \beta = \frac{v^2}{c^2} \quad \vec{v} = \vec{v}_0 + \vec{a}t$$

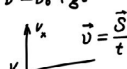
$$N = Fv \quad T = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{l}{g}} \quad \Delta = k\lambda + \frac{\lambda}{2} - \min$$


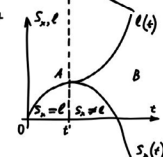
$$N = Fv \quad \frac{h_1}{h_2} = \frac{\rho_2}{\rho_1} \quad \vec{S} = \vec{v}_0 t + \frac{\vec{a}t^2}{2} \quad S_x = \frac{v_0^2 - v_{0x}^2}{2a_x}$$

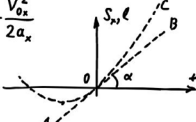
$$E_k = \frac{mv^2}{2} \quad \varphi = \frac{kq}{er} \quad V_x = V_0 - at \quad S_x = V_{0x}t + \frac{a_x t^2}{2} \quad F_A = \rho_B V \quad \vec{v} = \vec{v}_0 + \vec{g}t$$

$$E_p = mgh \quad \vec{p} = \frac{m_0 v}{\sqrt{1-\beta^2}} \quad S_x = \frac{a_x}{2} (t^2 + 2 \frac{V_{0x} t}{a_x}) \quad F_2 = F_1 \frac{S_2}{S_1} \quad \vec{v} = \frac{\vec{S}}{t}$$


$$E = \frac{kx^2}{2} \quad v = \frac{\lambda}{T} \quad S_x = \frac{a_x}{2} (t^2 + 2 \frac{V_{0x} t}{a_x} + \frac{V_{0x}^2 - V_{0x}^2}{a_x^2})$$

$$E = E_k + E_p = \text{const} \quad S_x = \frac{a_x}{2} (t^2 + 2 \frac{V_{0x} t}{a_x} + \frac{V_{0x}^2}{a_x^2}) - \frac{V_{0x}^2}{2a_x}$$


$$A = \frac{mv_0^2}{2} - \frac{mv_1^2}{2} \quad S_x = \frac{a_x}{2} (t + \frac{V_{0x}}{a_x})^2 - \frac{V_{0x}^2}{2a_x}$$


$$\eta = \frac{A_n}{A} = \frac{N_n}{N} \quad S_x = \frac{a_x}{2} (t + \frac{V_{0x}}{a_x})^2 - \frac{V_{0x}^2}{2a_x}$$


**YOU MAY BE MAKING IT
MORE COMPLICATED
THAN IT NEEDS TO BE**

You may be making it more complicated than it needs to be

What do first-time course creators spend their time thinking about? They think about the course name, the pricing, the tech, the platform... they get stuck in the weeds.

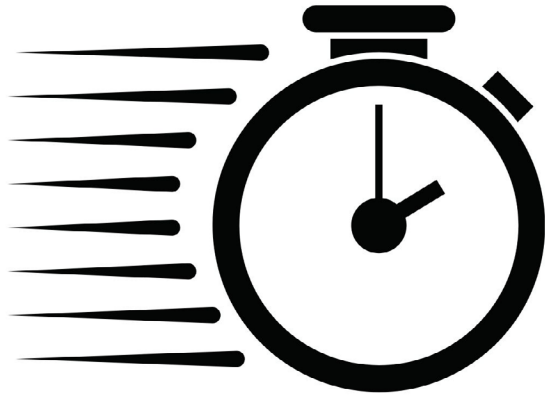
You see the name, the pricing, the tech, the platform... these are all details. It's much more important to focus on the foundations before working on the details.

It's just like building a house. You don't start building a house by focusing on the furniture and fittings. If you do, you'll just end up with furniture and fittings and no house to put them in.

You first need to lay the foundations, then build the walls and add the roof. And once all the foundations are in place – you can start working on the details.

So, if you're stuck on the details right now – then you're in the right place. This book and planner will help you get unstuck so you can focus on your course foundations – and once they're done, all of the details will follow.

**THE TIME IS
NOW**



There's no better time

In the (not so distant) past, when you said you wanted to take a course it used to mean attending an in-person class. Or possibly an old-school correspondence course via snail mail.

Then online learning portals and MOOCs, or Massive Open Online Courses became a thing. These were made by organisations like edX or Coursera and were designed to resemble traditional in-person learning and were led by experts in the field. People with what was considered relevant education or experience.

They were also quite difficult to create, requiring instructional designers to help with the curriculum design and professional videography teams to record and edit the video content. It was a complex and expensive process.

Then the world moved online

And courses moved too. Especially after ‘the year that shall not be named’ (aka 2020), the demand for online courses skyrocketed.

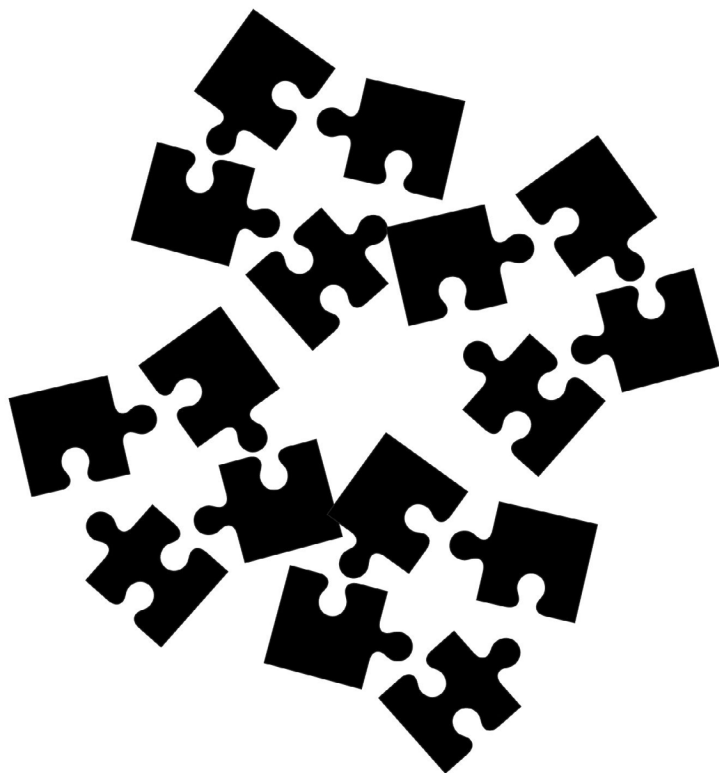
We’re living in the information age, where you can learn about anything and everything online. We have instant access to knowledge that would have been difficult or impossible to find in the past. The first step for people who want to learn about something new is to Google it or search for a video on the topic on YouTube and it’s safe to say that you’ll find information on any topic you’re interested in using either of these tools.

And sure, these tools can help you find information on anything. But you still have to sift through all the results they serve up to find

quality information. It's time-consuming and often frustrating. This is where the new brand of online courses come in.

So, there really is no better time to do it. The world is primed and ready for online learning and your audience is ready and waiting to learn from you.

IT'S TIME TO DECONSTRUCT



It's time to deconstruct and reinterpret online courses

Because creating a course doesn't have to be that complicated. You can make it as simple or complex as you need to.

And that's where this book comes in. I've deconstructed the course creation process for you. Broken it down into appetiser-sized pieces so you can select what you want to add to your plate and build your course in a way that works for you. And just as importantly, in a way that works for your target audience.

No more getting stuck in analysis paralysis and hours of Googling to figure it all out. You get all the information you need in one place and can design your own course the way you want to.

WHY NOT



YOU?

If others can do it then why not you?

Do you know that there's an actual course that teaches Zombie Apocalypse survival tactics?¹ Or an MIT course that teaches you Street fighting Mathematics?² Or even a course on Wasting time on the internet?³ (I'm sure that most of us don't need any help with wasting time on the internet and yet it's an actual course that people pay for). So it's pretty much guaranteed that there will be a market for your course. Even if it's a course on how to knit cardigans for chickens.

Let's talk about imposter syndrome

Creating a course for the first time is going to push you out of your comfort zone. That's a given. And it's going to bring up all your 'stuff'. So, if you don't get your mindset right, you'll get bogged down in self-sabotage before you know it – and then your course will never get made.

Imposter Syndrome is the biggest mindset block that course creators face. That feeling of not being good enough, “I'm no expert” or “Who am I to teach this?” And surprisingly, it seems to affect smart, successful people more. The very people who should be sharing their knowledge.

The easiest way to overcome imposter syndrome is to understand that to be an 'expert', you only need to be one step ahead of the people you want to teach. That's it.

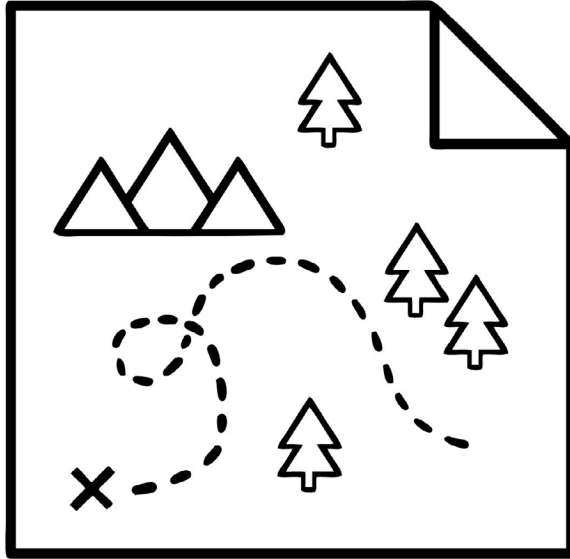
The people who want to learn from you (generally) don't care about your certifications*. They care about whether you can help them. And in a lot of instances, having someone just one step ahead is

better than an expert. An expert may be too far ahead to relate to the initial struggles people experience.

And if you're worried that your market is saturated with courses on the same topic, by people who you think are better at it than you. Here's the thing, when you create a course, you add your own special flavour to it. Colonel Sanders wasn't the first person to invent fried chicken and yet that never stopped him from building the KFC empire that's still going today. If anything, a crowded market just means that there is definitely a need for your course - with your very own secret spice.

The important thing to remember here is that your course doesn't need to be 'perfect'. It doesn't need to include all.the.things. It doesn't need to take months/years to create. You don't need to invest in the best and most expensive tech and course platform. It just needs to help someone.

** This obviously excludes anything that actually requires a certificate or diploma to practice ie. Doctor, Lawyer etc.*



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE



How to use this book

Remember those fun ‘choose your own adventure’ books you read as a kid? If you weren’t a kid in the ’80s then perhaps you may have seen the Bear Grylls, ‘You vs Wild’ interactive series on Netflix⁵. The basic principle is that you choose the path the story takes. This book is a bit like that. I’ll give you all the information you need and then you pick the pieces you want to use to build your course. So it’s a ‘*choose your own adventure*’ course creation book.

The first part of the book is all about **redefining** online courses. This will help you understand the foundational aspects of online learning. Understanding this is the key to creating a successful online course.

The second part contains all of the **deconstructed** parts that make up an online course. Everything from videos to course hosting options to the tech you need.

The third part of the book is all about **reconstruction** - choosing the elements you want to include in your course and putting them all together.

So, the aim is that you first read through the chapter about redefining online courses and figure out your very own foundational elements. Then take what you need from the chapter on the deconstructed parts of online courses. Then along with The Doable Course Planner you’ll follow the steps in the reconstruction chapter to put it all together.

Now you have an idea how it works - let’s get started!

Redefining online courses

If we look at the dictionary definition of the word 'course' it says:

course

a direction or route taken or to be taken.

It doesn't say that the route needs to follow a specific path or that it needs to have x, y and z to be effective. Or that you need to have a certain qualification to point the way.

So, if you can guide someone on a path to a desired destination or transformation using only emails, that's a course.

It's also important to consider that people learn in different ways and a structured approach doesn't work for everyone. Even in schools, we're seeing a shift from structured to unstructured learning, where there's no linear journey from A to B. Students are given an overview of the lesson and the criteria for their success. From there they walk their own path to understanding. A path full of rich experiences that lead to learning discoveries.

Think about it. The real world doesn't have tidy, straight-line paths to figuring things out. It involves messy trial and error, success and failure - and it's how we learn best.

As long as you can create learning content in an organised and engaging way, that allows users to progress in their understanding of a certain topic – you've got a course.

So what does this mean for you as a course creator?

Creating a successful online course doesn't have to be complicated and overwhelming. It doesn't have to follow a cookie-cutter approach. You don't need to include *all.the.things* if you don't want to. It's only as complicated as you make it.

Your course doesn't have to take months/years to create. You don't need to invest in the best and most expensive tech and course platforms. It just has to help someone.

So, let's step out of the outdated restraints and get creative with online courses. This book is all about making online courses easier to create for you and more effective for your audience to learn from.

By the end of this book, you will have all you need to be able to create a course in a way that suits both you and your audience.

Now, let's have a little fun and imagine that creating a course is a lot like going on a quest. Like a 'Lord of the Rings' type quest – which I guess makes us all Frodo Bagginses.

With every great quest, there needs to be a purpose.

Frodo's main purpose was to save Middle Earth by destroying Sauron. That's a very important purpose for a quest, right.

For you, your purpose is the main reason you want to create a course. Commonly known as your 'Why'. Why do you want to create a course?

Your main purpose may be to free up some time in your day to spend with your family. To expand your reach so you can help more people. Or just to make a couple of extra bucks. All are equally noble. But if you don't have a clearly defined purpose before you start on your quest to create a course - I guarantee that you won't make it to the end. Because just like Frodo, you are going to face challenges, so your reason for doing this has to be meaningful to you.

This is important so take some time to figure it out before you start. And once you've figured out your main purpose, I want you to write it down and keep it somewhere where you'll see it every day. Perhaps a sticky note on your wall or a Post-it stuck to your monitor.

Then every time you start feeling overwhelmed you just need to take a look at your 'Why' to remind yourself why it's important for you to keep going.

Chapter Two

re·de·fine

to reexamine or reevaluate especially with a view to change

REDEFINED ONLINE COURSES



= Learning

Let's redefine online courses.

One of the biggest problems with current online courses is that they don't teach people to think. The ancient Greeks had different terms for the theoretical knowledge of something (episteme) and know-how (techne). This is a bit like the difference between knowing how the steering wheel and gears in a car work theoretically - and knowing how to drive a car. So, when it comes to redefined online courses, nobody needs more information (theoretical knowledge). They want to feel engaged in their learning process.

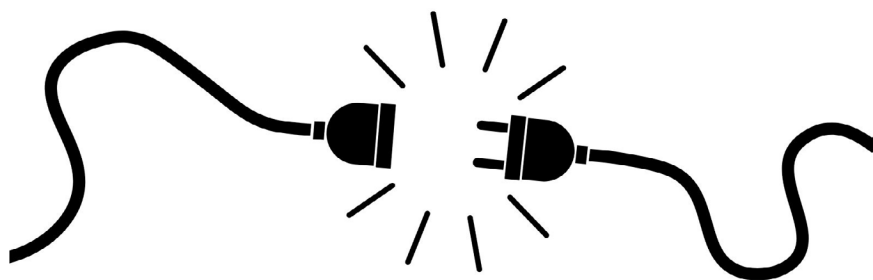
To redefine online courses we need to move beyond the emphasis on knowing what - to knowing how.

We need to do better. Otherwise, we'll just be adding to the online course detritus and never get off the hours for dollars treadmill. Or never help the people our course is created to serve. Or never make a cent after all the effort we put into creating a course.

That's why I wrote this book. To give you both the theory on what makes an effective online course, as well as practical guidance to help you actually create your course.

There are three main foundations to a redefined course. They are **Connection, Gamification** and **Personalisation**. Now let's take a look at what defines a redefined online course.

IT ALL STARTS WITH CONNECTION



It all starts with connection

Relationships are the foundation of online courses. Wait what? Aren't online courses my way out of relating and doing one-to-one work with clients?

Let me rephrase. Relationships are the foundation of successful online courses and to elaborate, I want you to think back to your school days (for some of us that means thinking back further than others). Now think about your teachers.

In school, I started out loving science. The topic fascinated me and I also seemed to be a natural at it - which made it relatively easy for me to excel in science. Then I got a new teacher. While I'm sure she had a great wealth of knowledge on the topic and may have been a fantastic teacher when she was younger. By the time I was in her class, she seemed to have given up. She was disinterested and disengaged - and just like that my marks plummeted and I lost my love of science.

I'm sure you've got a similar story about a teacher, someone who either made you love or hate a subject. We're relational beings and being able to feel connected to a teacher will influence how much we learn from them.

So it's essential that you build a connection with your learners during your course. You can't be passive and disengaged - please don't be like my old science teacher.

But how do I build a connection with an online course?

Well, there are lots of ways you can build a connection with an online course - let's look at a few of them.

#1 Have a clear purpose

Every single part of your course should have a clearly defined purpose. No 'fluff' or filler. Before you create any course content make sure you have answers to these two questions:

1. Why should my course attendees care about this?
2. Is it worth their time?

Think of how frustrating it is when you attend a webinar that doesn't have a clear message. You know what I'm talking about, right? The 60-minute sales pitch with 5 minutes of actionable information you were promised in the click-bait title. The 'live' ones that don't have any video controls so you can't speed it up or skip to the interesting bit. What a waste of time!

Your learners should never feel like they're wasting their time. They should be keen to see what else you have for them.

#2 Tell relatable stories

Who doesn't remember a good story? Storytelling is part of our DNA and including them in your course content guarantees engagement.

You can enhance your courses with storytelling in the following ways:

- Design your course content to follow a natural path the way a story would.

- Describe a transformation. This story structure is as old as time and is known as the hero's journey 6. If you're telling your story it might not be fun to talk about the low points, but they are highly relatable. Your audience will get far more out of hearing about how someone struggled in the beginning and then managed to overcome their difficulties than just hearing about how well they're doing now. If people can see themselves in your stories they'll be able to relate to them.

#3 Get emotional

Tapping into people's emotions will increase the chances of your course being memorable, exciting and enjoyable. The emotions themselves don't necessarily have to be good. We remember feeling happiness and joy but often anger and sadness are just as memorable (if not more so). The point is to make your learners feel something. This goes hand-in-hand with storytelling, telling a story that evokes strong emotions guarantees that your learners will remember the lesson and learn from it.

#4 Who's it all for?

You build a connection by considering your audience. Because when it comes to learning, one size does not fit all. It's important that you consider who's learning needs have to be met with your course.

Who are you creating your course for? Answering this question will give you insight into the type of course and content you should create. For example, c-level executives would likely want to see numbers and statistics, while a DIY enthusiast will want to see how-to tutorials. If you start creating your course content without considering who your audience is and what their experience with the subject matter is, you'll just end up frustrating them.

So, how do you make sure your course content is going to connect with your audience? By considering their needs. If you are your target audience - that's great because you'll know exactly what your audience needs.

If you aren't your target audience - you need to find someone who is and talk to them. The aim here is to figure out what course content suits your target audience best - as a whole - because you're never going to be able to make everyone happy. There will always be outliers. Once you know what your audience needs you can create course content that best meets those needs.

Here are some important considerations you'll need to consider when it comes to course content for your target audience:

- **Occupation/topic considerations.** Make sure you match your course content to your topic. Using lots of statistics, charts and graphs in a course for financial analysts makes sense. But statistics, charts and graphs for a course on watercolour brush techniques makes no sense at all. Neither does trying to explain yoga postures with text.
- **Lifestyle considerations.** Are your learners' sleep-deprived Moms who need to work on your course while their baby sleeps? Then hour-long videos are just not going to work. Shorter videos with downloadable workbooks would work better. Are your learners 9-5 workers? Then perhaps audio content would be best because they can listen to it during their commute to and from work.
- **Level of experience considerations.** Make sure you create content that suits the level of experience your audience has. That way the experts won't get frustrated if you focus on basic level knowledge. And those who are less experienced won't get lost if

you focus on expert-level knowledge. Creating a course called a Masterclass in Portrait Photography and then teaching people how to use their camera is just going to frustrate them.

#5 The myth of different learning types.

I'm sure you've heard that we all have different learning preferences - I was sold on that idea for many years (I even wrote a blog about it). But here's the thing, the evidence for people having different learning styles is anecdotal at best. Now I don't want to get too much into the 'science' of learning types here, I've included a lot of links about it on the reference page⁷. But the fact is that we all learn best when presented with the same information in different ways - as this reinforces the learning.

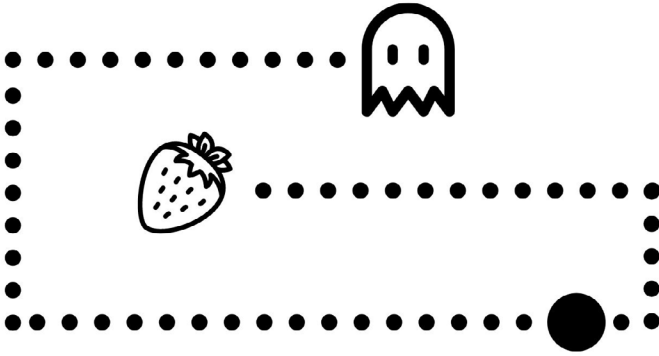
According to the learning types research there are supposed to be at least 4 different types of learners. Visual Learners, Auditory Learners, Read/Write Learners and Kinesthetic Learners but the reality is that we're all a combination of different learning types. And the best learning experiences are those that involve different ways of learning the same thing. So, it all starts with understanding your audience and then creating different types of course content ie. video, audio and written.

- Varied content = more course engagement
- More course engagement = more learning
- More learning = more likely to achieve the goal of the course
- Achieving goals = happy learners and glowing testimonials

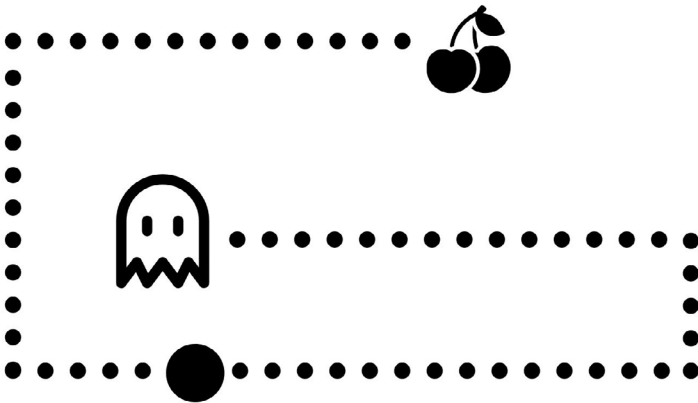
Having course content that connects, not only helps you provide value to your course attendees but also helps them relate to you more.

So please take some time to figure out who your audience is and what they need from you in your course. And you'll get to put this into practice in Chapter Four as well as in The Doable Course Planner.

Having course content that connects, not only helps provide value to your course attendees but also helps them relate to you more.



GAMIFICATION



Gamification - it's not JUST fun & games

Now we've built a connection with our audience - we need to keep them engaged. I'm sure you've heard about gamification in courses and possibly how great gamification is for improving engagement. But not many course creators understand what gamification is and how they can implement it into their courses. This section will help you figure out how you can gamify your course.

What is gamification?

Games have probably been around for as long as humans have and I'm sure we can all agree that games are fun. But games serve a much larger purpose than just entertaining us. They're also very effective tools for teaching.

Think about the classic board game, Monopoly. For over 100 years, Monopoly has allowed us to pretend to be real estate tycoons. But the game also offers a lot of lessons that can be applied in the real world.

For example, you can't win at Monopoly if you buy every piece of property you land on. You'll soon run out of cash. Then when you land on someone else's property (or end up in jail) and have to pay up - you'll have no cash to pay them with. The same principle applies to real-world financial matters.

If you blow all your cash on buying shiny things, you won't have any left for your financial obligations like paying rent or buying food. I'd say that's a pretty good lesson to learn in a game, with Monopoly money, instead of in the real world.

Let's get clear on exactly what gamification is because it's often misunderstood. People think it means making your course into a game. Or that if you add points and badges, you've successfully gamified your course. Or that because your course deals with serious material, gamification won't work. These are pretty common misconceptions that apply to another term - "Game-based learning".

If it's not a game then what is gamification?

The Wikipedia definition is:

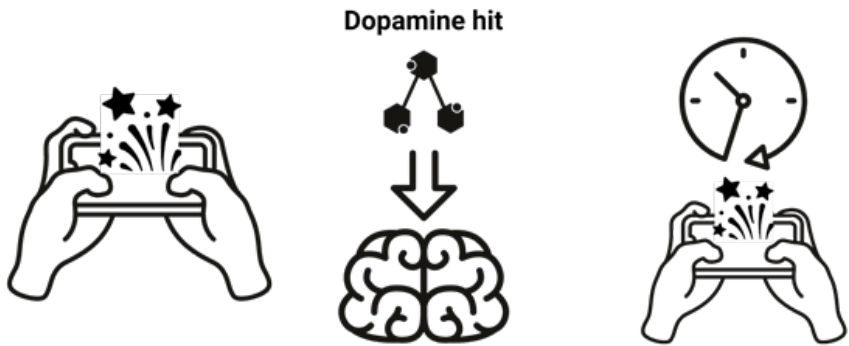
ga·mi·fi·ca·tion

the application of game-design elements and game principles in non-game contexts.

So, it's the addition of elements that add interactivity, engagement and immersion to your course. Elements that make the learning experience both more enjoyable and more effective.

The brain science bit

Let's consider the game Candy Crush Saga or if you're a little older perhaps, Tetris. Both are very simple, yet highly addictive games. They start out easy, so you think, *"Yes, I've got this!"* And this is what happens in your brain:



Kill it at Candy Crush > your brain gets a reward > you want to do it again!

And now it's too late my friend – you're hooked! Soon you'll be dreaming about those colourful blocks.

In your brain, a sense of achievement results in the release of the neurochemical, dopamine. It also taps into the same neural circuitry involved in addiction. Now, most people know of dopamine as a pleasure chemical, but it also plays a vital role in learning and reinforcing our behaviours (or getting us addicted to Candy Crush). Back to online courses. What is the main aim of most online courses? Learning new skills and changing behaviours, right. And we've just learned that both of these things are enhanced with the addition of dopamine. So, dopamine helps people feel good when they learn and helps them form new habits. However, it can be challenging to

stay motivated all the time. Thankfully, gamification can also help with boosts of motivation along the way.

For motivation, we could all do with a little help from Serotonin. Serotonin is a mood-enhancing hormone. Lots of serotonin means a sunny mood and a drop in serotonin might leave you feeling a bit meh! A serotonin release can be triggered by remembering things like past successes. So if people can see their progress or look at rewards they have earned, they get a little hit of happiness. So that's why progress bars and badges work.

Gamification also helps people deal with cognitive overload while learning. The brain can only handle a certain amount of information at a time and if it's overloaded, you'll stop taking in information and feel overwhelmed. Providing the information in a game like, challenge-based format, along with the other neurological benefits of gamification, makes the content easier to retain.

So, can you see why gamification in courses is so powerful? Those neurochemical and happy hormone hits, lead to a boost in motivation that makes the whole learning experience much more powerful and memorable. And later in this book, I'll share just how easy it is to gamify your course.

ADD MORE 'YOU'



Make it personal

Sure people may be interested in your course topic, but what they're really buying is you. Your experience, your methodology, your personality. It's more than just information they're after, otherwise, they'd just Google it. So for a redefined online course, you need to add more 'you'.

How do you add more 'you' to an online course?

There are many ways to add more 'you' to your course, with things like Facebook groups, live Q&A sessions, DM's and even personal emails. It's about making people feel seen and that they're not just a name on a spreadsheet.

Here are a couple of ways that you can make your course more personal.

Have a kick-off party. This is easy to do with courses that have a set start date. Set up a live session the day the course starts and have people introduce themselves and tell you what their expectations are of the course. If it's a really large group they can do this via comments with something like Facebook Live or any of the streaming tools like Streamyard⁸. If it's a smaller group you could have a Zoom call and talk to them face-to-face.

If your course will be evergreen or not have a set start date, you could do something similar with a video of yourself welcoming people into the course and inviting them to submit their own videos of their expectations of your course using a tool like VideoAsk⁹.

Let them peak behind the scenes. There's nothing that builds intimacy more than inviting people into your personal space. Record a video showing them around your office or workspace - a *'this is where the magic happens'* video. If you have a specific item that you use every day that has a personal story behind it - tell the story. For example, if your course is about Chinese tea ceremonies and you inherited your Grandmother's teapot, that's a beautiful story to tell. Have a quirky coffee mug that you always drink your coffee out of? Tell the story behind that. That glimpse of your personal space will help them connect to the human being that you are.

Hand-held guidance. Take them by the (not literal) hand and guide them through the process. You can do this via written communication or recorded videos. Welcome them to the course, give them a walk through the course process and platform. At the beginning of each lesson, outline the topic and then at the end give them a recap of the key points discussed. Be there to guide them every step of the way.

Support. Things are bound to go wrong at some point and that's ok, as long as you know about the problem you can fix it, right? No one wants to struggle with something and feel helpless so it's important that you make them feel comfortable with asking for help. Make sure they know exactly what to do when things go wrong or if they have questions.

Accountability. The reality is that your course is competing with everything else that's going on in your course attendees lives. They have families, jobs and Netflix. And we can all do with a bit of accountability every now and then. But it needs to be done properly - no one wants to feel like they're being nagged. Consider how you can hold them accountable without making them feel bad. Group

posts with weekly check-ins work well. They can share goals and accomplishments as well as what they're currently working on.

Office hours sessions. Consider how great it feels to get a question answered the moment you ask it. That's what office hours or co-working sessions do for your course attendees. You could schedule weekly sessions where people get to work on the course online together as a group - with you there to answer any questions as they crop up. Or you could get them to share their questions and get immediate feedback from you and/or the other course attendees.

Redefined courses need to be better. Not more complicated - but simpler, more personal and they need to provide more than just information.

Get this right and your course will stand head and shoulders above the plethora of meh! online courses already available.

Why not have fun and get creative and make something people will love!

Chapter Three

de-con-struct

*reduce (something) to its constituent parts in order to
reinterpret it*

Let's deconstruct online courses

There are so many different ways to create a course and the best way for you to figure out what works for your course is to make an informed choice. And it's only if you know what all the options are, that you can make an informed choice.

In this section, you'll find an overview of all of the different types of online courses and the various bits and pieces that they're made of, as well as the tech and programs involved in creating and hosting them.

There are different types of online courses?

Yes, my friend, there are many different types and hybrids of those types. So if you were considering creating a specific type of course, after reading the next section you may just change your mind.

Then, I've deconstructed all of the types of content available to you for your course. Consider all of your options as well as what your audience would prefer content-wise before selecting the types of content you'd like to create.

And lastly, I've given you some guidance on the various kinds of tech and programs that are involved in the creation of course content. So you can figure out what (if anything) you need to buy to create the content for your course. I've only included tech and programs that I've personally used in my course creation business, and I'm not affiliated with any of these recommendations in any way. You're also not limited to using one of my recommendations. The idea is to see what's available and find an option that works best for you.

Choosing tech and course hosting platforms keeps course creators stuck for far too long so I'm going to let you in on a secret. There is no "best course platform", there is no "best course type", there is no "best type of course content".

Please don't overthink it. Take a look at the options I've listed here and just pick something that sounds like it'll work for you and your audience. It's not a tattoo - if you don't like what you choose you can change it. And a lot of the programs/apps I recommend have trial periods so you can try before you buy.

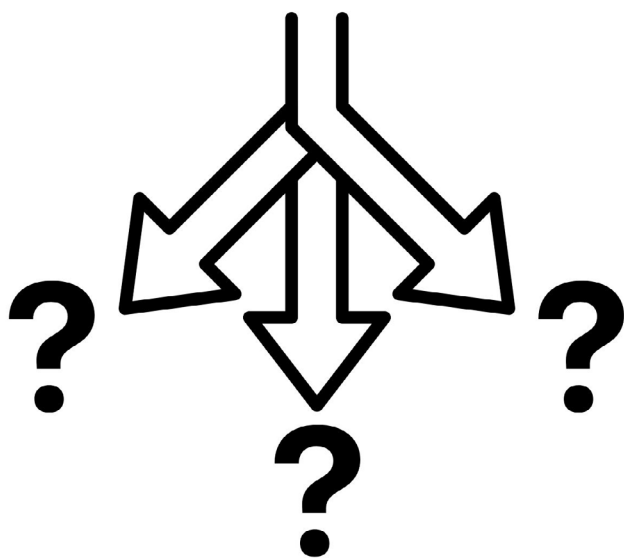
The reality is that your first course isn't going to be perfect. You're going to build it, run it and then refine it - probably multiple times and each time you'll get better.

Don't let this part hold you back. It's just like learning to drive - you start out feeling like there are way too many things to think about and you'll never get it right. Then before you know it, you're driving on your own in peak hour traffic.

It's completely doable.

Right so let's get started with a look at the different types of courses. what's available and find an option that works best for you.

WHAT TYPE OF COURSE SHOULD YOU CREATE?



Types of Courses

What type of course should you create? Don't feel pressured into creating a full-blown signature course your first time around. I mean when we're babies we learn to crawl, then walk, then run, right? Large courses can take months to build (more if you're doing it all on your own) and many course creators start off really well only to run out of steam before they finish. Which is a complete waste of time.

Think of your first course as the first version of the course you'll ultimately end up with.

Creating your first course can be a steep learning curve so it's smarter to start off small and build a bigger course once you've got some experience. I'd recommend you create a Minimum Viable Product (MVP). An MVP is a development technique used in product development, where you start with just the basic features necessary to satisfy early adopters. Then new features are designed and added based on feedback from those early adopters.

You can apply this concept to creating your course and create a Minimum Viable Course (MVC) which you can add to and refine based on the feedback from your first course attendees.

Now, I'm going to walk you through 9 different types of online courses and the pros and cons of each type. This is by no means a complete list and I've only included it here to give you an idea of what you can create.

I've also given you a couple of examples of each type of course that I've seen online to get you thinking about how you can make them work for your course topic. Some of these examples are hybrids of different course types and this should help you envision what you can do for your course.

#1 An easy first option is the Challenge

With a Challenge, your audience commits to taking some kind of action for a set period of time to achieve a specific result. A great challenge provides a transformation that's both desirable and achievable in a short period of time.

Challenges are powerful because we all have a need to improve ourselves and they help us achieve a sense of accomplishment.

The Challenge Pros:

- Challenges are great for building a community and growing your email contact list.
- They're relatively easy to set up and a perfect starting point for first-time course creators.
- They're also an easy way for people to try out what you have to offer without having to pay for your full service.
- Challenges help generate engagement with current and potential customers.
- They're great for providing social proof. Challenge subscribers who achieve the desired transformation will want to share their results. Who wouldn't want to brag to their friends about losing 10 pounds? Or the fact that they'd written the first chapter of their book? And if they're sharing their results they're also going to be talking about you. This in turn leads to future challenge subscribers or people who want your product/service. A win-win situation.

The Challenge Cons:

- Getting people to sign up and actually do the work is key. A challenge requires people to actively participate in order to get results so it needs to be something they really want to do/achieve.
- A Challenge takes more work than a simple downloadable lead magnet. You need to be actively involved, responding to your subscribers' messages and engaging with your group.

Some examples of Challenges:

- Meditate every day for 21 consecutive days
- Stop overspending with a 10 day no spend challenge
- Create something beautiful every day
- A visibility challenge where everyone commits to recording a FaceBook Live every day
- Daily act of kindness
- Get more greens in your diet with a green smoothie challenge
- A 10-day no sugar challenge
- Write a blog a day

#2 Introduce yourself with A Mini-Course

A Mini-Course is usually no more than 2 hours long and often addresses something that is keeping your audience stuck in some way and gets them started on a new path. It provides a quick win for both you and your audience.

A mini-course can serve as a minimum viable product to test an idea for a new product/service you'd like to offer. If you're a service provider that provides in-person services, creating a mini-course can attract new customers and potentially boost your revenue. It's also

a great way to test your course creation skills, if you can manage a mini-course you should be able to create a full-blown signature course.

The Mini-Course Pros:

- They are easy to create and can be anything from 30 minutes – 2 hours long.
- You can easily repurpose content from your blog, podcast, YouTube videos or any other content you've already created.
- You can offer a mini-course as a lead generator and use it to collect emails to add to your contact list.
- It'll help establish you as an authority and to build trust with your audience. If it's a video mini-course, you'll become a "*real*" person in the eyes of your audience.
- You can use the reviews that you get from your mini-course as social proof on your website to establish credibility.
- It can be held live which means you can launch as soon as you have enough sign-ups.

The Mini-Course Cons:

It's a tricky balance. You need to provide just enough information to solve an immediate problem but still leave them wanting more. Get this wrong and people will do your mini-course, have their problem solved and then never buy from you again. The idea is to get them moving in the right direction, but not take them all the way to where they want to be.

Some examples of Mini-Courses:

- Learn your first hand-lettering strokes
- 3 steps you can take to get out of credit card debt
- 10 tips for communicating with your teen
- Leash training for your new puppy

- Cross-stitch for beginners
- Exercises to improve mobility in seniors
- Arrange your first bridal bouquet
- Create a capsule wardrobe using your own clothes

#3 Build interest with a Preview Course

A Preview Course is a way to prepare your audience to work with you more in the future. People who enjoy your preview course and want to learn more are more likely to enroll in another course like your Signature Course in the future.

So it's basically a preview of a larger course and can be either a high-level overview of the topic or an excerpt or single module of your larger course.

Some important considerations when creating a preview course are:

- What topic related to the course idea will people find the most interesting?
- How much content will be enough to peak their interest and get them to buy?
- How much content is too much for the price?
- What content can you add to make it a great offer?

The Preview Course Pros:

There are many pros to creating a preview course. Here are a few important ones:

- Like a mini-course, you can use it to gauge demand for your topic before investing time and resources in a much larger course.
- It's perfect if you need to start making money before your larger course is ready.

- It allows you to identify areas to improve and change so you build a course people really want.
- You can build fans and get testimonials for social proof for your larger course.
- It'll help develop momentum and engagement for your larger course.
- It'll keep you on track in building your larger course. Creating multiple preview courses for each step of the transformation can be a way for you to build your larger course bit by bit.
- You can use it to build an email list then nurture these leads for future signups to your larger course

The Preview Course Cons:

As with the mini-course you need to provide just enough information to solve an immediate problem but still leave them wanting more. You should also keep in mind that whatever topic you choose, it should stand alone. So even if it's the only course someone takes from you, it still provides so much value they become a raving fan.

Some Preview Course Examples:

- If you're a branding coach and have a 'social media for coaches' signature course, your preview course could be a short tutorial on creating engaging posts.
- If you're a money mindset coach and have a full-blown signature course on how to transform your relationship with money your preview course could be identifying your core money beliefs.
- If you teach English to non-English speakers and your signature course is how to master conversational English, your preview course could cover vocabulary that is useful in starting a conversation.
- If you are a vegan blogger you could create a signature course on how to do a plant-based detox. Your preview course could be how to make plant-based smoothies.

- If you're a relationship coach and your signature course is about how to heal damaged relationships then your preview course could be about communication styles.
- If your signature course teaches people how to sing, your preview course could teach some vocal warm-ups.
- If your signature course is about cooking for one, your preview course could be a guide to buying the right amount of fresh foods to prevent wastage.
- If you're a gardener and your signature course is about growing a vegetable garden, your preview course could be about preparing your soil for the best vegetables.
- If you're a mixologist and your signature course is about mastering well-known cocktails your preview course could be about buying the essentials for a home bar.
- If you teach writing to would-be authors and your signature course is about writing your first fiction book, then your preview class could be the first steps of story development. If you offer a signature course on knitting, your preview course could be teaching the basic plain stitch
- If your signature course is about creating your first cosplay outfit, your preview course could teach how to choose the right materials for your cosplay outfit.
- If you're a tennis coach and your signature course is about improving your tennis game, then your preview course could be on mastering baseline play or footwork.
- Is teaching magic tricks your thing? Then a great preview course could be about fundamental sleight of hand methods.

#4 Total transformation with a Signature Course

Signature courses are the courses you become known for. Your main *'body of work'* where you share something you've mastered well and can teach others to do. It's completely unique to you and your expertise. While someone else might offer something similar in your niche, each course will have its own unique *'flavour'* because you bring your own experience and personality to the course. A signature course can be anything from a how-to system to help people achieve a set of predefined outcomes, to lessons on how to overcome personal or professional challenges based on your experience.

A signature course is the most detailed and comprehensive course option, providing an immersive experience that combines different online content, activities and tools together in one place. People can either move through the course in a controlled manner, module by module or are provided access to all content at once so they can choose what to focus on first.

The Signature Course Pros:

- A signature course helps establish you as an expert in your niche
- It provides another way for clients to work with you if they can't afford your one-on-one price.
- It allows you to differentiate yourself from other providers in your niche.
- It allows you to move your business beyond a one-on-one hourly revenue model.
- The process of packaging a signature course will help you streamline your processes for other offers.

The Signature Course Cons:

- Creating a signature course will take focus, time and energy away from your business.
- You need to have the time to figure out the tech involved or pay someone else to handle this aspect.
- Depending on the type of content you create for your signature course there may be costs involved for things like tech tools, video editing etc.

Some Examples of Signature Courses:

Marie Forleo's **B-School**¹⁰. B-School is an 8-week interactive, video-based training program designed to teach online marketing strategies to business owners who want more sales and more impact from their online presence. Marie's program walks you through what she has defined as the 6 Pillars of business success. This is what makes it uniquely hers.

Amy Porterfield's **Digital Course Academy**¹¹. DCA is a 12-week program that helps online business owners and entrepreneurs turn their knowledge and know-how into a digital course that will generate consistent revenue through live and evergreen webinar launches. Amy's digital courses have generated millions in revenue with DCA being her most successful. Amy's vast amount of experience is infused in DCA which makes it her signature course.

Jeff Walker's **Product Launch Formula**¹². PLF is a proven, step-by-step process that shows you how to launch a product in precise detail. It teaches you exactly what to do every step of the way, right down to which blog post to release when, and what to say in every email. Jeff is a pioneer in his niche and has been in the game for more than 20 years. He focuses entirely on launches and knows his subject inside out because he's used it to build his million-dollar business.

Denise Duffield Thomas' **Money Bootcamp**¹³. Money Bootcamp is a transformational money mindset training program for women entrepreneurs. It consists of an intensive six-week online course plus a supportive mastermind community. Denise DT has had many courses over the years, but Money Bootcamp is her signature course and teaches what she is known for, money mindset.

Daymond John's **Daymond on Demand**¹⁴. Daymond on Demand is an interactive, virtual, step-by-step video training system for entrepreneurs invested in starting and scaling their businesses. Daymond has taken all of the most impactful lessons that he's learned through 25+ years of experience to help you avoid common pitfalls and maximise your profits. It's infused with Daymond's flair and showmanship making it his signature course.

#5 Hand-held guidance with Coaching Courses

Coaching courses are focused on helping people get results. You provide training and guidance and walk them step-by-step through your method or process for achieving a specific goal.

Coaching courses often drip content and tasks (release them in intervals), to control the flow of information and not overwhelm course attendees. Getting them to focus on one specific task or objective at a time is when coaching happens and a great way to get results. You're there to guide them through the process and support them in their transformation.

A lot of Signature courses are a hybrid of coaching and signature courses with the inclusion of live coaching sessions – usually restricted to a certain period of time (ie. a 12-week period).

The Coaching Course Pros:

- You could position it as an upsell, downsell, or complementary to your one-to-one coaching program.
- It's an excellent way to attract more clients, allowing you to scale your business and still have an element of one-to-one work.
- It'll increase your credibility.
- Coaching courses enable people to get faster results.
- It'll enhance learning by giving people a chance to review and apply their knowledge right away.
- Combining live and recorded coaching sessions creates repetition and reinforcement of material covered in the course.
- People have a chance to ask questions and clarify anything they're unsure about.
- A coaching course will allow you to 10x your impact as a coach.

The Coaching Course Cons:

- This type of course can take more time to create.
- It relies on you having an existing program or methodology that you can convert into a course.
- There is more preparation involved including recording videos and making yourself available for live sessions.

An Example of a Coaching Course:

Martha Beck's **Wayfinder Life Coach Training**¹⁵. Wayfinder Life Coach Training teaches people how to navigate toward happiness and success in their own lives while learning to coach others to do the same. Along with the guided process, the course includes personal instruction and guidance by Martha Beck and a team of expert instructors along with a community for additional support.

#6 From 1:1 to 1:Many with an Optimised Service

An Optimised Service is for those of you who offer a done-for-you service but instead of actually doing it for them you do it with them. You give them everything they need in order to be able to do it themselves and then you provide lots of personalised support in a group setting to get it done.

So, it's similar to a Coaching Course - with the key difference being that a Coaching Course is more open-ended, and an Optimised Service will have a clearly defined start and end.

The Optimised Service Pros:

- You transition from a one-to-one service model to a one-to-many.
- They do the work and you review it with them weekly.
- It's a more affordable option for those who can't afford your done-for-you service.
- Keeping the groups small means that people still get an element of personalised support from you.

The Optimised Service Cons:

- Just like a coaching course, you need an existing program or methodology that you can convert into a course.
- It needs to solve or achieve something concrete by the end of it ie. In the end, you'll have a website, or have written a book, or iced your first wedding cake.
- This isn't a one and done, hands-off service. You'll need to be actively involved and present on the weekly review calls, providing guidance and feedback to each of your learners.
- Because the support is more intensive you'll need to keep the groups small

- An Optimised Service usually has a defined start and end date so it's not easy to transition to an evergreen model.
- It may be tricky if people have different levels of experience.

Examples of an Optimised Service:

Mariah Coz's High Ticket Hybrid¹⁶

This is an optimised service that provides you with all you need to scale your online course or coaching business by adding a strategic, scalable, low-maintenance but high-touch, high ticket group coaching program to your product suite. And it includes her trademarked system for creating a high ticket group coaching program along with templates and other resources that allow you to do it yourself. There are weekly coaching calls with Mariah and her team and weekly critiques and reviews, for personal feedback on your work.

Allie Bjerck's Impact Lab¹⁷

Impact Lab is Allie Bjerck's Optimised service and she limits this to 35 people at a time. The Impact Lab promise is that Allie Bjerck will work with you to help you double your traffic, conversions and sales over a 6 month period. You get one-to-one time with Allie, access to the high-support group coaching program with strategy, tech, ad and copywriting experts by your side. Along with 2 group coaching calls a month.

Hello Funnels 5K Funnels Formula¹⁸

This is an intimate online implementation program designed to show you the exact steps and give you all the plug-and-play templates you need to create your own evergreen funnel. With all the support, feedback, templates and training you need to make sure your funnel is foolproof. And it's currently only available by invitation to a small group of people.

#7 Ongoing Support with a Membership

The key differences between a Membership course and any other course type are that a membership course is open-ended and is paid as a recurring subscription. There is also usually a community aspect to membership courses, people get to join a group of other subscribers all on a similar path. Membership courses provide new content on a regular basis and continue to engage the community through exercises or challenges.

Whether that's in the form of new courses, new content, or the creator of the membership being present to do regular live sessions, the recurring aspect is the key differentiator.

The Membership Pros:

- The major pro to a membership course is the recurring subscription revenue. This is a massive benefit because you don't need to rely on one-off sales.
- It suits topics that teach multiple skills, or whose skills and achievements would take several months to achieve.
- They're great for getting feedback and measuring engagement as you can interact with people in discussion forums or Facebook groups.
- Less upfront effort and costs to produce.
- Provides an element of exclusivity as only those who pay can access your membership course's content.
- Easier to pivot and adapt according to people's preferences as content creation is ongoing.
- Often lower-priced than courses, which can attract more customers.

The Membership Cons:

- • If you want to simply add a form of passive income to your business, a membership course is not for you. It requires delivering consistent value to your members so they're willing to keep paying their subscriptions.
- • An engaged and successful online membership community requires a significant investment of time or resources.

Some Examples of Memberships:

- Liam Veitch's, Freelance Lift¹⁹
- Carrie Green's, Female Entrepreneur Association²⁰
- Eddie Faria's, Game Arts Academy²¹
- Rachel Feldman's, Your Health Coach Biz²²
- The International Gem Society Membership course²³
- Neiru Japanese nail art tutorials, techniques, and styles²⁴
- Mixing Light's membership courses²⁵
- Kate Crocco's, Confident Ladies Club® Accelerator²⁶
- Pat Flynn's, Power-Up Podcasting²⁷

#8 Make it Official with a Certification Course

The major difference between a Certification course and other courses is that a certification course includes an assessment of knowledge, skills and competencies.

Certification courses also award some sort of credential to those who have demonstrated their competency in the subject. This is often in the form of a certificate or diploma.

The Certification Course Pros:

- Certification courses allow you to scale your work, especially within the corporate market.
- Companies might want to certify their own trainers using your certification program to build internal capacity.
- A certification course can help you make a name for yourself in your industry.
- You can use your certification course to become a respected voice and thought leader in your industry which could lead to a demand for your other products or services.

The Certification Course Cons:

Certification courses require that you assess the knowledge, skills and competencies of people who take the course to ensure they have gained the skills required.

Some Examples of Certification Courses:

Brooke Castillo's **Life Coach Certification**²⁸. Life Coach School provides life coach certification training that teaches people how to coach clients and how to make money as a coach.

Daymond John's **Certificate in Entrepreneurship**²⁹. This highly acclaimed certificate program is designed for beginning to intermediate-level small business owners and managers as well as entrepreneurs seeking to launch new ventures or who want to achieve continued growth in existing businesses.

Gary Craig's **Complete EFT Certification**³⁰. The Emotional Freedom Technique certification course is an academic certification teaching the Emotional Freedom Technique.

Knitting Guild Association's **Professional Knitter Certification**³¹

This course is designed for those who want to take their work to the next level for their personal satisfaction or as a step to fulfilling professional goals as sample/test knitters or finishers.

#9 Collaborative learning with a Cohort-based Course

A Cohort-Based Course is a collaborative learning experience and is quite similar to a normal college environment - with the main exception being that it is held online.

It consists of a group of people who get together online to complete a course. They all start at the same time and move through the course at the same time. Lessons take place live through video conferencing tools such as Zoom.

Course activities such as assignments etc can be completed by the individuals on their own or as group assignments.

The Cohort-Based Course Pros:

- Cohort-based course attendees can make friends, build relationships and meet online as if they were in an offline class.
- Teaching takes place in a live environment so no pre-recorded videos - which is great if you're uncomfortable with recording yourself.
- Your audience will be able to discuss lessons, share notes and learn from each other - meaning that you don't have to be available 24/7 in your group.
- You can structure the lessons according to the needs of the group and change things on the fly.

- You can partner with other instructors to teach lessons and share revenue
- Because there's lots of personal interaction and accountability built into a cohort-based course you can charge a premium rate.

The Cohort-Based Course Cons:

- Cohort-based courses have specific start and end dates as well as due dates for lessons and assignments.
- Teaching is all done live so you have to have a reliable internet connection.
- Finding a lesson time that suits all time-zones may be challenging.
- Because of the level of individual attention you'll need to provide - this is best for small groups.

Some Examples of Cohort-Based Courses:

Seth Godin's **altMBA**³²

This is a 31-day online leadership workshop that celebrates our shared humanity and provides students with the skills they need to be impactful leaders and make meaningful change.

Tiago Forte's **Building a Second Brain**³³

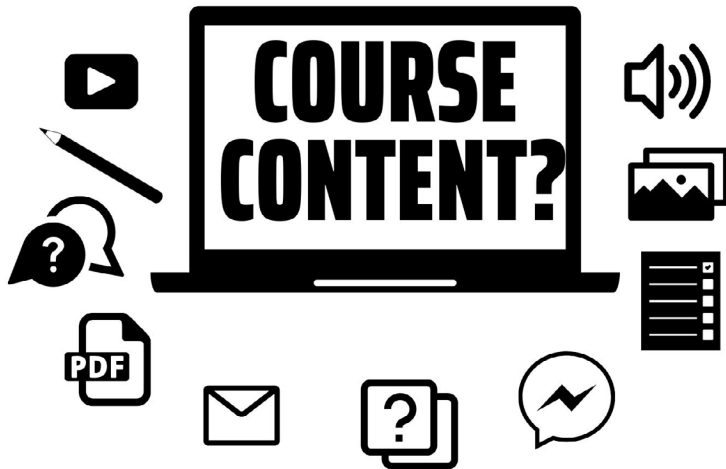
A Second Brain enables people to create their own personalised knowledge management system in 5 weeks. It's a live online course that teaches a systematic method to capture, organise, and express ideas, leading to creative breakthroughs in work and life.

David Perell's **Write of Passage**³⁴

In Write of Passage, you can develop a systematic process for cultivating ideas, distilling them into writing, and sharing them with the people who can make the biggest difference in your career.

Figuring out what type of course you'd like to create before you start, determines what needs to happen afterwards, like where to host your course and what type of content you need to create. And don't feel that you HAVE to pick just one course type - you could always do a hybrid if you like.

WHAT TYPE OF



Types of Course Content

Course content provides the ‘meat on the bone’ or substance of a course. It’s what brings about the learning or transformation your course provides. As discussed previously, the more varied your content is, the more interested and engaged people will be. But if you can help people achieve a desirable transformation via an email a day - don’t feel pressured into creating a full-blown course with different types of content. Do what works best for your audience.

Don’t forget to also consider the aspects of a redefined online course and see how you can add content that builds a connection, gamifies and allows you to add a personal element to your course.

The first course content type is video

For first-time course creators, video production may seem scary and overwhelming, but in reality, you can easily create professional quality course videos yourself.

Do I have to have videos in my online course?

Well, no you don’t *have to*, but including video can add to the perceived value of your course. Also, refer back to your audience considerations, video may be the preferred content type for your particular audience.

Course creators who include video along with text and images build a connection with their audience. Being able to see the person you’re learning from builds trust. So if your course topic requires people to trust you - they’ll need to see your face.

Basically, video provides more perceived value, more engaged learners and more trust.

That being said, if you're very uncomfortable being on camera, you don't have to include video of you talking on camera in your course. There are different types of videos for courses so you can find an option that works best for you. They all have their place and are useful on their own - or blended together.

The 8 types of videos to consider for your course are:

1. Talking head

Picture a person talking directly to the camera, this is what a 'talking head' video is. This type of video works best when you don't need to explain complicated or technical concepts. Talking-head videos are more about creating a connection and building trust with your audience as it's easier for your course attendees to form a bond with you when they see you on the screen.

2. Screencast/screenshot

Screencasts provide a visual example for people to watch and then perform the activity themselves. Perfect for when the learner needs to actually see how to complete a task. You record your computer screen while you talk in voiceover. There are a number of ways to incorporate screencasts in a course, everything from software demos to step-by-step tutorials.

3. Slideshow

The slideshow is similar to the screencast. With a slideshow, you create a presentation slide deck and then run through the slides and record yourself in voiceover discussing the points presented on the

slides. You only need to show key information on the slides and then discuss them in more detail in your voiceover.

4. Webinar

A webinar is usually run live and is a combination of a talking head and slideshow with an element of audience interaction usually via comments/posts. This allows people to see you, your slides add visual interest and the ability to comment provides engagement. This makes webinars very effective learning tools.

5. Whiteboard/tablet/Artpad

Similar to a screencast or slideshow this involves either a camera pointed at a physical whiteboard recording you while you teach certain concepts visually by writing/drawing them out on the whiteboard. Alternatively, you can record your writing/drawing on a PC, tablet or artboard while talking through the concepts in voiceover.

6. Demonstration

Similar to a talking head video, but instead of having the camera recording your face, you record your whole body or hands as you demonstrate something physically. Think mixing cake ingredients or doing yoga poses.

7. Animated Videos

Usually created with specialised software, animated videos are full-length animations of your course material - with your voiceover. Think educational cartoons. You can also use animations to illustrate specific parts of your course and include these in talking head videos or Slideshare videos.

8. Interview style

Interviews with experts in your topic can help elaborate a point you're making or provide expert advice. A great interview should include a personal anecdote to engage interest, then you can provide a few tips and examples to help people grasp important concepts in your course. Interview style videos can be prerecorded or live and involve two (or more) people and a moderator who asks questions while you (or a guest or panel of people) answer them. The questions can be determined before recording or posed live via comments on a webinar for example.

Downloadable course content

We've established the importance of creating content that promotes engagement and one medium which works particularly well for promoting engagement is interactive PDFs.

With interactive PDFs, you can create highly engaging content for your learners to download and use.

What are interactive PDFs?

We've all seen and used PDFs before and probably know of plenty of different ways to create them. But what is an interactive PDF? While a standard PDF is a static document, if you use a tool such as Adobe Indesign, standard static PDF documents can be made 'interactive'.

You do this by adding elements that engage the reader and require interaction from them to 'explore and experience' the document, rather than just passively read it.

Why you should consider interactive PDFs

- Almost all computers have Adobe Reader on them, or it can be installed quickly and easily for free.
- You can use any font, colour, branding and style. There are no limits or restrictions to the way you design and layout your PDF or how many pages it needs to have. They don't even have to be 'A4' sized. You can make them square or A5 if you like.
- They can support offline learners with limited internet connections. You can make highly interactive PDFs without the need for any internet connectivity at all (obviously excluding links to online content).
- They're inexpensive to create.
- They can easily be emailed or downloaded as the files are small.
- You can also set permissions, security barriers and printing restrictions on PDF files to protect your content.

When they can be useful

At a time when bite-sized learning is becoming the norm, interactive workbooks can help engage time-poor learners.

Interactive PDFs are particularly helpful:

- When online delivery needs to be supplemented with more in-depth information
- Where the learning objective is to provide knowledge rather than test skills and competency.
- If learners are short on time and need to be able to refer to information quickly and easily.
- If bandwidth is low or learners are in an offline environment.
- When learners need self-guided practice on certain elements of your course, an activity-based PDF guide can take people through a series of exercises to achieve their goal.

What types of interactive PDFs work for courses?

EBooks With large courses, the amount of information can be quite extensive. If you are providing lots of information to read, an ebook is a much better option than on-screen text. That way people can print it if they prefer to read from a page. You can also include interactive elements like clickable links to additional resources and buttons to navigate around the document. And you can also connect them to other downloadable content with download links ie. download a worksheet.

Workbooks. Where ebooks are more for passive reading, workbooks provide a more hands-on, interactive experience. They're a great way of offering step-by-step instructions to complete a task or provide prompts to get people thinking. Allocate note-taking areas with exercises and checklists for them to work through and type/write in their own information.

Checklists. There are a few ways you can use checklists in your courses. For example, if there are several steps to a process that needs to be followed, create a checklist for people to check off as they move through the process. Who doesn't like to tick things off when they're done? It works best if they don't need a detailed how-to, but rather a reminder of the actions to be taken.

Quizzes & Assessments

Course quizzes and assessments are more than just a fun activity, they're also quite useful tools. They can help reinforce the concepts taught in a lesson and they can also be used to help you figure out if there are any gaps in your lessons (where people aren't quite *'getting it'*). Which in turn helps you refine your course content and improve your course's effectiveness.

How to use quizzes

- They work well for repetition and reviewing information.
- Starting a lesson with a quiz is also a good idea. It gives them a preview of what's coming so they know what to expect from the lesson.
- You can also use question and answer quizzes for problem-solving scenarios which in turn can be reviewed in group discussions.
- Mini-quizzes distributed throughout your course will help keep learners engaged and are also a great way to break up text-heavy lessons.
- If your course provides certification with a final exam, you can also use quizzes for exam practice.

There are also different question types for you to consider for your course quizzes. Not all course hosting platforms will support all of these question types so keep this in mind when choosing where to host your course.

You could always use a separate quiz tool and embed that within your course platform if their quiz questions are insufficient for your needs.

Here are 9 question types to consider adding to your course:

1. **Multiple choice** - A direct question with one correct answer hidden among a couple of incorrect ones. It's a good idea to make the wrong answers represent common misconceptions.
2. **Multiple Response** - Like the multiple-choice option, but with more than one correct answer. These are a little more tricky to answer as learners don't know how many options are correct.
3. **True/False** - You make a statement that is either true or false.
4. **Short Answer** - This is a direct question with a field for learners to type in a short answer. Great way to find out if learners know the content as they don't get to see any suggestions (as with the multiple-choice option).
5. **Fill in the Blank** - You type out a statement and leave out key pieces of information for learners to complete the sentence.
6. **Sequencing** - This is great for creating a timeline, arranging things in ascending/ descending order or a step-by-step process. You list some events or statements and your learners must put them in the correct order.
7. **Essay** - Here you ask an open-ended question for them to answer. Perfect if you want a detailed answer to the question, an example or a case description.
8. **Visual assessment** - With this one, you provide an image or diagram and then ask for feedback on certain aspects of the image/diagram.
9. **Likert Scale** - A Likert Scale essentially gives learners a range to select from. You make a statement that they Agree/Disagree with, or are Not likely/Likely to do or find Hard/Easy. For example: The statement 'Course creation is hard' could have the Likert Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

Other types of content to consider

On-Screen Text

With online courses on-screen text is inevitable. It's the perfect way to deliver helpful information that may include links to other resources, along with pictures, graphs and charts. Because no one loves reading reams of text on a screen, it's best to keep it short and to the point. Use bullet points and headings to break up large chunks of text. Certain course hosting platforms (like Learnworld) provide ways for your audience to add notes and highlights to on-screen text, which is very useful.

Assignments

Assignments are great for accountability. You could get people to do these themselves with things like writing in their journals or sharing something in a group discussion. They can also be 'watch and do' assignments where they watch a video on how to do something then go away and practice in real life ie. learning how to bake a cake.

Infographics

Infographics combine pictures, words and very often numbers and statistics in a visual way. They allow you to portray what may be a dry or complex subject in an interesting and visually appealing way. People often prefer to view an infographic than read loads of text containing the same content.

Animated GIFs

Memes and GIFs are extremely popular. Consider adding relevant ones to your course to illustrate a point and add some humour. You can also create your own GIFs by recording yourself, a process or product features and then use a tool like Giphy to create a video loop, they provide more information than a single image.

Motion Graphics Animations

What is motion graphics? Motion graphics are a type of animation. Essentially animated graphic design with text being a major component. They're usually short animated clips, think logo animations, or animated text that overlays your video. They're great for things like explainer videos and are easier and cheaper to create than full animations.

Audio

Audio content facilitates learning without having to look at a screen, perfect for people that are on the move or need to multitask. It's also super helpful for things like language courses where people can practice pronunciation with you, or meditations or guided visualisations. Full-blown podcasts are also great, you can record your own or find other podcasts that are complementary to your course.

Discussion Lessons

Discussion lessons are great for increasing course engagement. Discussions help people think through the content and formulate their own understanding and ideas which they can then share with others. This fosters greater engagement with each other and the course material overall.

Email/SMS/Messaging App

The beauty of email/SMS and messenger (WhatsApp/FaceBook) messages is that they're accessible, effective and easy to create. They're also highly personal and provide instant reach. You can use them to send lesson links, give students time to reflect on an upcoming topic or even add new course content in real-time. They're also helpful for reminders about assignment due dates, announce last-minute changes and share feedback.

You can even include shorter text message-type assignments as a complement to longer online ones. ie. You text an assignment for them to complete via reply email. Some people may find SMS and Messenger messages intrusive so make sure that your audience is comfortable with these before you start using them.

Simulations

Participants in a simulation are able to learn through performing an action and are especially helpful where the theoretical aspect isn't enough on its own. They get to perform a task immediately after a concept is discussed which reinforces learning.

Charts & Graphs

Charts and graphs provide visual representations of data and they're useful in a lot of different ways. They can give a concise visual representation of a large amount of information, provide comparisons and highlight trends, to name a few ways you can use them.

Case Studies

Real-world examples are extremely helpful in courses and what better way to include them in your course than through case studies. They give meaning to abstract principles with stories of their use in real-world settings. Problem/solution case studies work well. ie. This was the problem we faced - and this is how we solved it.

So you see there are lots of different options available for course content and using a variety of different types will make for a much more engaging course.



The tech doesn't matter

While creating online courses requires tech tools and programs, the type of tech used is really not important. Those foundational aspects discussed in chapter 2 are. So, if you get your foundations right then you can create a great course with just a mobile phone and a couple of text documents. Get those foundations wrong, and no amount of fancy tech is going to help.

I guarantee that there will be tech that works for you whether you're tech savvy or not. Consider a knife. There are many types of knives and they all serve a different purpose. It's exactly the same with tech. There are many different tech options available to course creators that suit different budgets and skill levels. Please don't get stuck in analysis paralysis or go with some guru's recommendation because they say it's the best.

You get to decide how easy or complicated to make your course creation process. In this section I'm not going to dictate what you should buy - you can choose what works best for you.

It's impossible for me to include all of the different tech and programs available on the market. That's like trying to hit a moving target as there are new products/software and apps coming out almost daily. So, I've given you an overview of tech and programs that I've personally worked with. You can either choose one of my recommendations or use the tips on what you should look for to make the best choice for yourself.

The curse of too many choices

But there are so many options - how do I choose?

Here's a simple trick that I use all the time. You can use it to figure out whether one of the options I've given you works for you. Or you can use it to find alternatives to my suggestions.

It's super simple - I Google it.

More specifically I Google something like:

- *'alternatives to (name of tech here)'*
- or *'the best video editor for Mac'*
- Or if someone's referred something to me and I want to know if it's any good I Google *'(name of tech they've referred) vs Filmora (or another tech that I know)'*
- Or *'reviews for (name of tech here)'*

Something else I do is ask for referrals in Facebook groups. People are happy to share what works for them and you can then take their suggestions and perhaps try them out (most software and apps give you a trial period). You can also look at reviews on sites like Amazon for things like cameras, lighting or microphones.

Or if you're ok with being an early adopter then take a look at Appsumo³⁵. Appsumo partners with (mostly) new tech companies to get you great deals on their products. So the new tech company gets people to buy their products and you get a great (sometimes lifetime use) deal on new products.

Right - so what camera, microphone, lighting etc. will you use to create your course material? What tools or programs do you need to get? Do you need to buy a video editing or graphics design program to create your course content?

Let's deconstruct the tech required to create a course.

Camera Options

Your phone/laptop

If you're just starting out with video then you probably have all you need to record your course videos right in your pocket. Your smartphone (or laptop) is the perfect place to start and can deliver a high-quality end result. Phones in particular work very well for recording video with even famous directors like Steven Soderbergh, using iPhone footage in their movies³⁶.

A Webcam

The natural progression from using a native laptop camera to film your video is to invest in a webcam. There are plenty of webcam options available with varying functionality and pricing. Important things to look for when you're shopping for a new webcam are:

- **Resolution:** Generally speaking, the higher the resolution of your webcam, the clearer the image will be. Try to aim for a minimum resolution of 1080p
- **Field of view (FOV):** A webcam's FOV refers to the observable area that the webcam's lens can "see." The broader the FOV, the more you can fit into the frame.
- **Built-in microphone:** Virtually all webcams have a built-in mic. Try to find a webcam with a stereo mic if you can or alternatively invest in an external mic for audio recording (more details on microphones later on).

A DSLR Camera

If you're into photography you may already own a DSLR camera and if you do then you've also got a pretty decent video recorder. DSLR cameras provide video quality that never disappoints. And as with a webcam, the higher the resolution you can get the better - that being said, recording in 4k or 5k is probably overkill for course videos. Full HD (or 1920p x 1080p) works perfectly.

Important things to consider with a DSLR camera are:

- **Frame rate:** A minimum of 24 frames per second is what you'll need - but you can record in 25 or 30 frames per second if you like. just be sure to match your shutter speed (see below).
- **ISO:** This determines how sensitive the camera is to light and basically the higher the ISO, the brighter the footage will be and the lower the ISO, the darker it'll be. The more you raise the ISO the more grainy your footage will be so stick to an ISO of between 100–200.
- **Shutter speed:** To set the correct shutter speed for video, double your frame rate. So if you're shooting at 24fps, your shutter speed should be 1/48 (you could just round this up to 1/50) and 25fps will be 1/50.
- **Aperture:** The lower the aperture, the more light the camera is letting in - which works best if you're recording in low light. Lower light will also make the background blurry and heighten the focus on what's closest to the camera. A higher aperture is best for when you want everything in your shot to be in focus.

Lighting Options

DIY lighting aka natural light

Filming near a window or glass door and using natural light is a cost-effective solution if you're on a budget. But just be careful with lighting changes. On a sunny day, clouds moving across the sun can cause lighting changes in your video. If possible, wait for a perfectly clear or completely cloudy day to get more consistent ambient light. Otherwise, you may end up with patchy footage.

Pro Lighting

Good lighting can make any video look more professional and if you intend to create a lot of videos showing your face, it's well worth investing in some decent lighting. It can be quite time consuming to set up and take down, especially if you don't have a dedicated studio space. So set it up and then do all of your recordings in one go.

Here are some lighting options for you to consider:

- **A softbox lighting kit:** Softboxes work by enclosing light from a lamp in a closed chamber and shining it through a layer of fabric to diffuse the light and soften the effect. This is great because soft light reduces contrast, conceals skin blemishes, and softens the edges of the shadows (and who can't use a bit of that right!). They come in different sizes and the larger the softbox, in relation to the subject, the softer the light becomes.
- **A ring light kit:** If you film mostly talking head videos, either using a webcam or on your smartphone then a ring light will work well and light up your face clearly. A lot of them have cooler and warmer light settings so try both and see which works best for you.

Sound Options

Clear audio is important for online courses, especially if the majority of the course is a screencast/slideshow with a voice-over. It may be worth your while investing in an external mic. When it comes to external microphones there are two options for you to consider:

USB microphone

USB microphones are affordable and easy to use. Here are some important considerations when it comes to USB mics:

- **Polar Pattern/Directionality:** A microphone's directionality describes how it picks up sound from its environment. Some read sound from every direction while others are limited to a specific area. What you need to look for is Cardioid or Supercardioid which is great at focusing on a single source and eliminating background noise.
- **Frequency Response:** This is essentially the range of frequencies a microphone can pick up - from low to high. For speaking voice, a mic with a 20 Hz to 20 kHz+ range is fine.
- **Plug and play:** Make sure the mic plugs directly into any computer with a USB input, no drivers required and that it's compatible with your device software (ie. mac or PC)

Lavalier (lapel) microphone

Lavalier microphones, also called lapel microphones, are tiny devices that clip onto your clothing. Here are some considerations for selecting a lavalier mic:

- **Polar Pattern/Directionality:** Omni directionality is better for lavalier mics as they are close to the sound source a.k.a. your mouth. Omni directionality is also less sensitive to motion, handling and breathing noises.

- **Wired/wireless:** If you select a wired lavalier, make sure that the cable is long enough for your requirements and that the jack size of the cable matches your devices (or if they provide an adaptor). A lot of them use a standard 3.5 mm microphone jack which works on most devices. If you choose a wireless lavalier then charging and battery life are things you need to take into consideration as well as how the mic pairs with your device ie. does it use Bluetooth.

Studio setup

Stage the scene

Using your home office as a background gives an authentic feel to your videos. Seeing people in their natural environment feels genuine and will make you relatable. Consider what's in your shot and move any unnecessary or distracting items. People are going to be reading those book titles on your bookshelf behind you so keep that in mind if you have any trashy novels you'd prefer people didn't know you read.

You could also rent a space to use for recording and it doesn't have to be a professional studio. Renting a stylish Airbnb for the day works well too. Just ask the Airbnb owners if they're ok with you recording on their property and in some cases, they may charge an additional fee.

Alternatively, if you're on a budget and don't have an area in your home that works, you could use a sheet as a DIY backdrop. Darker colours work better than white which tends to create a washed-out look, especially with bright lights. Bright colours like yellow, orange, or red may give off a colour reflection ie you may look a little jaundiced if you use bright yellow. Muted tones like grey and dark blue work well but different colours have different vibes, so it's really a matter of personal preference. Experiment with what works best with your brand and your course material.

Echo echo echo...

A common problem with home audio recording is sounding like you are in a bathroom. That echo-ey sound that you usually get when speaking in a large empty room. A very simple solution is to use blankets, pillows, rugs, couches, and soft furnishings to absorb sound. It's as easy as draping some blankets or throwing some cushions around you - off-camera - and closing doors.

Additional Accessories

Here are a couple of additional accessories that you may find useful when setting up your studio.

A video tripod: You'll need something solid and suited to holding your camera (or phone). Being able to tilt/angle the camera is useful, but for online course material, this isn't essential especially if most of your recording is stationary.

A professional backdrop: There are various inexpensive options for video backdrops like seamless paper, wrinkle-resistant polyester fabric or pop-up collapsible backgrounds. These can be plain or patterned backdrops like brick walls, wooden planks or even polka dots. You could also have one custom made with a background design of your choice. You could also choose a green screen backdrop and select a digital background for your recordings ie. if you're recording with Zoom you can select a virtual background.

Sound Panels: If sound clarity is very important to your content, buying and installing a few sound panels to muffle background noise might be worthwhile.

A teleprompter/Autocue: If you have a tendency to go off-topic or forget important points you want to include in your video then it may be worth your while to get a Teleprompter. You can either get one of the physical teleprompter devices or use a simple app that gets installed on your phone/laptop.

The Programs/Apps

Talking head recording program options

Recording a Talking Head style video is pretty simple and all you need to do is set up your camera device and hit the record button.

- **Smartphone** - You can use the phone's native camera app or if you want more functionality you can install an app like FiLMiC Pro which extends your phone's camera functionality.
- **Laptop Camera/Webcam** - Most laptops come with onboard video recording programs. To access the camera on a Windows 10 Laptop, hit the Windows key to open the Start menu, search for "Camera" and click on it to launch the program. For Mac, to open the Photo Booth application press Command+Space to open Spotlight search, type "Photo Booth", and press Enter.

Screencast/slideshow recording program options

A good screen recorder will allow you to capture both still images and videos of unlimited length. Some move beyond just screen capture and into full-blown video production and editing.

Here are a couple of options that will do this for you:

- **Screencastify**³⁷ - One of the easiest tools to use, Screencastify allows you to record both screen and webcam and automatically save to Google Drive or publish to Youtube. It also provides basic video editing tools and they have a free version that gives you most of the features with a 5-minute recording limit if you'd like to try it out.

- **Zoom**³⁸ - By far the most commonly known option, Zoom allows you to record yourself talking as well as sharing slides and you can move easily between the two options.
- **Powerpoint**³⁹ - The ability to record a slideshow is available both to Microsoft 365 subscribers and non-subscribers. Although subscribers get a few extra features. You can record audio or video narration as you run through your presentation and save it as a video file.
- **Canva Pro**⁴⁰ - Canva also provides present and record functionality similar to Powerpoint. Once you've recorded your presentation you can either use the generated link to the video or download it as an MP4 video file and add it to your course hosting platform.
- **Camtasia**⁴¹ - Camtasia provides both screencast/slideshow functionality as well as being able to record talking-head type videos. In fact, it also provides video editing functionality so is a great all-in-one.
- **Wondershare Filmora**⁴² - As with Camtasia, Filmora also provides screencast/slideshow functionality with video recording and video editing. You can choose if you want to record videos using the built-in or external webcam, record a voiceover or capture your computer's screen and webcam video at the same time.

Programs to create motion graphics animations

Motion graphics can get pretty complicated and if tech is not your thing it may be worth your while finding a motion graphics designer to help you out. A lot of video editing tools include free text animations and simple animated graphics that you can customise and use in your videos.

Here are a couple of programs you can use to create motion graphics, ranging from easiest to use to more complex:

- **Giphy**⁴³ - You can create your own custom gifs using Giphy. Just upload your image or video clip, decorate it and add a caption and you're ready to create a GIF.
- **Canva Pro**⁴⁴ - Canva has a pretty extensive library of animated graphics that you can add to your designs and download to use in your videos. Canva also has some basic animation functions that you can use for your own designs, animate your design, then download it as a GIF or video file.
- **Hitfilm Express**⁴⁵ - Hitfilm Express is a free all-in-one video editing and motion graphics tool. Its motion graphics functionality is not quite as powerful as the next program on this list but you can still do some pretty decent animations - for free. What I really like about it is the fact that you can create animations on the fly while you're editing your video. No need to start up a separate program to create a quick text animation.
- **Adobe After Effects**⁴⁶ - After Effects is pretty much the industry standard for motion graphics design. You can take any design and make it move in the way you want it to. Whether that's titles, logo intros, lower thirds text or transitions, AE does it all.

Video editing programs

Before you jump into the video editing process using your PC or laptop, you'll need to check that it can handle video editing. There are a couple of specifications to check. Firstly, it's always best to have as much memory as possible - this is the RAM part of your PC and the absolute minimum you'll need to do basic video editing is 2MB of RAM (depending on the video editing tool - some need more).

You'll also want a powerful processor. Preferably a processor with a speed of 2.5 gigahertz (GHz) and higher. Finally, you'll want to make sure you have plenty of storage available to hold the software and video footage with which you'll be working. Your best bet is to get a computer that has more than 1TB of storage but, failing that, you could store your footage on an external hard drive.

Now if your eyes have completely glazed over with the tech talk or you have no idea what the technical specifications of your machine are, don't worry - there are video editing apps that allow you to edit online instead of using your laptop's processor etc.

Generally, most video editors offer everything you need to do basic edits, but you may prefer one over the other for their usability or other features. The key here is to choose one that works for you and your skillset, computer capability and budget.

Here are some of the tools I have either worked with in the past or use daily.

- **iMovie**⁴⁷ - iMovie is a free app for iOS and macOS which allows you to edit video on your iPhone or iPad or Mac. With iMovie, you can add videos to projects, trim clips, add transitions, slow or speed up footage, create a split-screen and fade audio.
- **Windows 10 Video Editor** - The Windows 10 Video Editor is included with Windows 10. It's the most basic of the video editors here but is also the easiest to use and handles all of the basic edits you may need to do. It's the perfect tool for anyone who wants to edit videos without having to master complicated software.
- **Movavi**⁴⁸ - Movavi Video Editor is simple and easy to learn for users who want to create quick videos. It provides a solid set of features that create a great final product at a pretty reasonable price and it's capable of handling all of the basic edits. Movavi's

interface has bigger and easier-to-identify icons than the other options we are looking at.

- **Wondershare Filmora**⁴⁹ - Great for both beginners and professionals and while many video editing programs claim to offer easy to use with professional results, Filmora is one of a few tools that actually delivers. It's easy enough for beginners and powerful enough to grow with you as you become more comfortable with video editing.
- **Descript**⁵⁰ - Descript provides a very different video editing experience. It has some very smart AI that converts your video into text - they call it a video word processor. So essentially you edit your video by editing text. Need to remove a sentence? Highlight the words in the video word processor and then hit the delete button - and it's removed from your video. It's powerful stuff.
- **Hitfilm Express**⁵¹ - HitFilm Express is the best free video editing software available. Not only is the video editor completely free, with no strings attached, but it's also one of the most powerful software packages for filmmakers, offering both video editing and visual effects compositing in a single package. Originally designed for independent filmmakers, it has many complex professional features. However, you can perform basic edits with ease. And once you've mastered those, the sky's the limit (erm, ok - maybe your computer's processing capabilities are the limit).
- **Adobe Premiere Pro**⁵² - Often seen as the industry standard, Adobe Premier Pro has all the features you'll need to edit videos and much more. It can be used on both Mac and Windows and also on a tablet or PC. It has lots of functions and features, so getting started can be overwhelming if you have absolutely no experience with video editing. But as with Hitfilm, once you've mastered the basics – the sky's the limit with what you can do with Premiere Pro.

- **WeVideo**⁵³ - WeVideo is an online video editing tool that is best if you don't have a very powerful laptop. You will however need a decent internet speed to be able to use it and you'll find it to be a very intuitive and easy to use editing tool that does decent basic editing.

Programs for creating captions/subtitles

Captions divide transcriptions of your audio into chunks of text that are synchronised with your video. Captions make your videos more accessible to people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or not native language speakers in your language.

Here are a couple of different ways you can add captions to your videos:

- **Kapwing.com**⁵⁴ - The Kapwing subtitle editor lets you add subtitles to your video directly so that the subtitles will not be lost no matter what platform the video gets shared to. Kapwing also has an AI-powered auto-generate feature for subtitles. So you can create subtitles automatically, then edit the auto-generated subtitles so that they are perfectly matched to the audio in your video. The free version has a 500MB file upload limit, which allows you to publish videos up to 10 minutes long. The Pro version costs \$20 per month.
- **Otter.ai**⁵⁵ - The free account provides 600 minutes of high quality, professional AI machine transcription every month and it's pretty accurate compared to other machine transcription tools available online. Their premium plan gives you the ability to download a .srt (subtitle) file which can be imported by some video editors.

- **Rev.com**⁵⁶ - Just upload your video/audio file and Rev.com's experts will create your captions/subtitles for you. You can choose from more than a dozen closed caption formats or receive your video back with the captions added to your video. You can also fix typos, adjust timing, change names, and clean up small issues with their Closed Caption Editor.
- **Youtube auto subtitles**⁵⁷ - If you are going to be uploading your videos to Youtube, they provide a free captioning tool (called Subtitles). Within Youtube studio, you go to videos > select the video you want to caption, and in the left-hand menu select Subtitles. If it prompts you - choose your language and edit the subtitles from within that language.

Presentation slide program options

Video is one of the most effective course content types available with a talking-head video being one of the most commonly used formats. But, video of one person talking, captured with one camera from a single perspective, without supporting footage isn't dynamic enough for a course video. That's where slides come in - to break the visual monotony. A great visual with a teeny tiny bit of text is all that's needed to make your point. Visuals are magic because they help your audience to pay attention, understand, remember, and use the information you share with them.

These days there are a lot of different tools available for you to design beautiful presentation slides, but having too many options leads to decision fatigue (yes it's a thing).

To save you from getting lost in Google search after Google search here are 3 options to help you make a choice:

- **Google Slides**⁵⁸ - Google Slides are completely free with a Google account. It is fully integrated with Google Drive so you're able to automatically save your slides there. The design process is simple and to the point and there are also hundreds of themes, thousands of fonts, embedded videos and animations all available for free. It has all the standard features, such as basic animations, transitions between slides and drawing tools. One disadvantage is that you're unable to embed any videos other than YouTube (so no Vimeo video's etc). All-in-all it's a pretty decent presentation tool and it's great that you don't have to pay a cent to use it.
- **Powerpoint**⁵⁹ - Powerpoint has been around for a long time and it's so pervasive that the word 'Powerpoint' is synonymous with 'presentation slideshow' irrespective of the software used to create it. Everyone has seen Powerpoint in action at some point in their lives. As for what you can do with Powerpoint, it is still the best in terms of the number of features you get with the program. There are a few new features like the Designer, that Microsoft has recently added to Powerpoint for Office 365 subscribers. The Designer uses elements you've added to the page to suggest new and innovative layouts you might not have thought of yourself.
- **Canva**⁶⁰ - If you really struggle with tech then Canva is perfect for you. It's a great tool to get you up and running with presentation slides quickly and easily. They have an extensive library of presentation templates that you can customise for your videos. Everything is drag and drop, and text can be edited much like text boxes in any other graphic design software. It's very intuitive and easy to use.

Audio program options

Want to provide things like meditations or guided visualisations with your course? Then you'll probably need an audio recording program to get the best quality audio you can.

Here are a couple of options to choose from to record audio files:

- **Windows 10 voice recorder**⁶¹ - Windows 10 includes a free Voice Recorder app and you can use it to record pretty much anything. It's very simple to use, and it includes all the necessary features to record, trim, flag important moments, and share your audio files.
- **Mac Voice Memos**⁶² - This is Mac's free voice recorder app. With Voice Memos, you can use your Mac as a recording device.

Audio recording AND editing programs

You could also use a tool that has both recording and editing capabilities like:

- **Descript**⁶³ - Descript is a revolutionary tool that allows you to not only record your audio but also edit it and create transcriptions with their audio to text AI tool. You edit the audio by editing text - removing noises and enhancing speech. They also have a one-click filler word remover tool that recognises "ums," "uhs", "you knows", and a dozen other filler words in your recording. Descript also allows you to fix audio mistakes by typing - the AI learns your voice, so you can type and generate audio that sounds just like you.
- **Audacity**⁶⁴ - Audacity is the go-to open-source audio recording application, and it puts a great deal of power in your hands. It

can record just about anything you throw at it all in a lightweight and clean interface. Audacity's strength is its simplicity, it is beginner-friendly, easy to use for quick edits you need to make on the fly. Whether that means filtering out unwanted noise, boosting voice or just cutting and pasting clips, it's extremely well-suited for beginner course creators.

- **Adobe Audition**⁶⁵ - Adobe Audition is a powerful, cross-platform audio editing software that's in a category of its own. Audition has specialised tools for cleaning up or restoring audio and offers precision, non-destructive editing. Audition also comes bundled with several thousand royalty-free loops and over 10,000 sound effects you can use.

Transcription programs (services)

There are a number of ways to generate a transcript from a video/audio file. Providing a transcript allows those who prefer to read the option to quickly scan through a lesson.

Here are a couple of transcription options:

- **Transcribe in Word (for the web) in Microsoft 365**⁶⁶ - With Transcribe in Word for the web in Microsoft 365, you can upload existing audio files and it'll automatically create transcripts from them.
- **Google Voice Typing**⁶⁷ - You can auto-generate a transcript with Google's free tools. Just go to Google Docs, create a doc file, and Select Tool > Voice typing > select your language and accent using the drop-down menu on top of the microphone icon > hit microphone icon before you play your video or audio. The voice typing tool will type the text for your video in the text file.
- **Zoom**⁶⁸ - If you're using Zoom to record your videos and

have a Zoom Business, Education, or Enterprise license with cloud recording enabled, Zoom will generate transcriptions of your recordings.

- **Descript**⁶⁹ - Not only does Descript provide you with Audio recording and editing and video editing capabilities - but it also generates transcripts from any video/audio files (and generates subtitles/captions).
- **Rev.com**⁷⁰ - As with captions/subtitles, Rev.com provides a transcription service. Just upload your video/audio file and Rev.com's experts will create your transcripts for you.
- **Otter.ai**⁷¹ - Otter.ai will automatically generate a transcript of audio/video files via import within minutes.

Downloadable content creation programs

- **Canva and Canva Pro**⁷² - You'll see Canva mentioned in a couple of different sections of this book and that's because it's a fantastic all-in-one graphic design tool. Canva has a lot of templates you can choose from for downloadable course content ie Workbooks or checklists that you can customise to match your own branding or you could design your own from scratch.
- **Adobe InDesign**⁷³ - InDesign is my go-to for any kind of downloadable course content. It's a desktop publishing and page layout designing program that is used to create flyers, brochures, magazines, newspapers, posters, business cards, postcards, stickers, comics, and many other types of documents or visual communication. It's great for both print as well as digital documents and one of its best features when it comes to creating engaging course content is the ability to create interactive fields i.e. areas that people can type in, that you don't (currently) get with Canva. The downside to InDesign is that it can be a little overwhelming to get started.

Quiz/Assessment programs

Most course hosting platforms provide some form of assessment or quiz functionality, however, they may not provide anything beyond the basic type in field or multiple choice question type. So if you want to use quizzes to add gamification or fun to your courses you may need to get another tool to do this for you.

Here are some of the quiz tools I've worked with:

- **Google forms**⁷⁴ - Google Forms is a free and easy-to-use form tool that runs within G Suite. It provides pretty basic functionality, but you can easily create quizzes or assessments using it. Since Google Forms is part of G Suite, you can pull data straight into Google Sheets for analysis.
- **Typeform**⁷⁵ - Typeform makes quizzes/assessments intuitive for both the creator and the user. Typeform's main differentiator is that they show one question at a time. It's easy to use with drag-and-drop quiz builder tools. And there are numerous templates to choose from which can be customized to your course needs
- **Interact**⁷⁶ - Interact allows you to create quizzes like those fun ones you see on Facebook and BuzzFeed (ie what Game of Thrones character are you). They have 800+ fully editable quiz templates you can use. You can create scored quizzes where your quiz outcomes are based on adding up your total points. Create branching logic quizzes where you show quiz takers different questions depending on how they answer. You can add images to your quiz questions to increase engagement. And within an assessment built with Interact, you can show people the correct answer to each question immediately after they answer it. You can also provide an explanation of why the correct answer is the right one.

- **Survey Anyplace**⁷⁷ - Survey Anyplace is one of the more advanced tools available, with skip logic, outcomes, and custom scoring that allow you to create highly personalised quizzes. They also allow you to provide a personalised feedback report for quiz takers to download at the end of the quiz.

Gamification programs

A lot of the course hosting platforms provide some form of simple gamification, with things like leaderboards, progress bars and badges. But remember, gamification goes beyond these and it's more about creating an interactive and engaging experience for your audience. You can use things like interactive pdfs, or quiz tools to gamify your course. Or use a program like **VideoAsk**⁷⁸ that allows you to create interactive videos to engage your audience. To give you an example, with VideoAsk you can record a choose-your-own-adventure learning experience, through asynchronous video with conditional logic. In just one click, students can respond to your video in 10+ different ways including sending a video back to you.

Video hosting options

Once you've finished editing your videos and they're ready to share, there are several ways to host and share them with your audience. If you are intending to use an online course platform like Kajabi, then you don't need to worry about finding a separate solution to host your videos as this will be built into the course platform.

However, if you are going to self-host your course using WordPress (with a course management plugin like Learndash) or completely DIY it with your website and email, then opting for a social video platform, such as YouTube, is common. However, if you are going to self-host your course using WordPress (with a course management plugin like Learndash) or completely DIY it using your website and email, opting for a social video platform, such as YouTube, is common.

There are some downsides to using YouTube to host your course videos, one of the biggest being that they may add 3rd-party ads to your videos. But there are several alternatives to Youtube you can also look at **Vimeo**⁷⁹ or **Wistia**⁸⁰ and both of these options have free versions that you can sign up for to give them a try.

Course hosting

You may be wondering why I've added the course hosting options here - almost at the end of this chapter - and there is method in my madness. Sure, figuring out where to host your course is an important part of creating a course. But first, you have to figure out what type of course you want to offer and what elements you'd like to include in it. Don't rush out to buy a course platform before doing this. Otherwise, you'll just end up shoe-horning your course into the platform you chose.

There are many factors that come into play when choosing a course hosting platform. Starting with what you need ie. Do you need a website, or do you already have one? Do you need a community forum or are you happy to use something like Facebook?

And there are so many platforms out there to host an online course that trying to figure out the best one for your course can keep you stuck in indecision.

Let's deconstruct course hosting options to try to make this process a little simpler for you. There are essentially three main categories for course hosting. The *DIY*, the *Platform* and the *Marketplace*.

What is the DIY?

The DIY is when you host your course on your own website using a plugin or group of plugins. There are plenty of plugins that allow you to host your course on a WordPress site and Squarespace has Memberspace which does something similar. Just keep in mind that you will need to host your video content on an external video hosting platform like Youtube, Vimeo⁷⁷ or Wistia⁷⁸.

The DIY is great if you already have a website and have the skills to add and set up the required plugins to make it work. And once it is set up there are little to no ongoing costs. This option is not for you if your website hosting package can't support lots of traffic/bandwidth or if you don't have the technical skills to do it yourself (and don't have the upfront cash to pay someone else to set it up for you).

What is the Platform?

When people talk about course platforms this is usually what they are referring to. These are hosted platforms designed for course creators that want an easy way to create their own branded 'site' to sell their online courses. They provide all the features needed to help you create, deliver, and sell your courses and also provide you with full control over your user data.

You pay a (usually) monthly subscription for the service depending on things like the number of features or courses or course attendees you have. Some also charge a transaction fee per transaction on top of the monthly subscription.

What is the Marketplace?

These are online course sites that in addition to providing a platform to host your courses, also provide a marketplace in which to sell them (think Udemy or Skillshare). The downsides to the Marketplace option are that you have no access to your user data and your courses are offered directly alongside your competitors. They also take a commission on any course sales and have control over your course pricing (and can discount without your approval).

Course hosting options

DIY course hosting options

- **LifterLMS**⁸¹ - LifterLMS provides a core WordPress plugin (with a payment gateway) then optional add-ons for things like advanced quizzes & assignments, private coaching, social learning and groups depending on your needs. It supports video hosting on Vimeo, Wistia, Vidalytics, VdoCipher or YouTube.
- **LearnDash**⁸² - LearnDash is the premium WordPress LMS and allows you to create and sell courses, deliver quizzes, award certificates, add forums, email notifications, download reports and much more. LearnDash is a plugin so will adapt to whatever WordPress theme you use, using the same branding and style as your website.

Platform hosting options

- **MemberVault**⁸³ - MemberVault is a supercharged membership site where you can put all your offers, courses, downloadables, PDFs, and even coaching or membership programs in one place. It also provides you with great insights into how your audience is engaging with your content. When people sign up for one course they get to see all your offerings within your 'Vault' and they can purchase other products when the time is right for them. MemberVault's unique selling proposition is its relational marketing aspect and powerful audience tracking. This empowers you to have relevant, personalised insights and conversations with your audience. You don't get video/audio hosting with MemberVault but it does support video hosting on YouTube, Vimeo and Wistia. They also provide easy integration to your favourite email provider ie. Mailchimp, Mailerlite etc.

- **New Zenler**⁸⁴ - Zenler was an online course platform that has been completely rebuilt from the ground up - now called New Zenler - and it offers features on par with Kajabi. They've added marketing tools and sales funnels along with their drag-and-drop page builder, upgraded course creator, email campaigns (with pre-created high-converting email scripts) and the ability to build your own community plus more features added regularly.
- **Teachable**⁸⁵ - An easy-to-use platform with unlimited students, no transaction fees (only Pro version and upwards), instant payouts, graded quizzes, advanced reports, course completion certificates, course compliance and advanced theme customisation. Teachable's real strength is how easy it is to use. In a matter of minutes, you'll have access to everything you could ever need to create and sell online courses and coaching, tech skills or no tech skills.
- **Thinkific**⁸⁶ - With Thinkific you can build your course, customise the design, market and sell it and provide support for your students. You can also host video, showcase your courses with themes specifically designed for courses and easily connect to your favourite email provider. Thinkific allows you to make the learning experience more enjoyable so your audience can learn the way they want with clear progress indicators and you can encourage them with automated check-ins and celebrate their wins.
- **Kajabi**⁸⁷ - Kajabi is a website and also provides integrated subscriptions, courses, and digital products. It provides seamless integration to payment applications, has an email builder and email marketing tools, sales funnels, CRM and communities. The main benefit of Kajabi is that you can build and run your entire online course business from a single platform. So there's no need to buy separate tools or learn to use multiple different programs.

Marketplace hosting options

- **LinkedIn Learning**⁸⁸ (formerly Lynda.com) - LinkedIn Learning operates a subscription model, but calculating instructor pay is slightly more complicated. The factors that determine instructor pay are total revenue generated on LinkedIn Learning in a given month, active users on the site, distinct views by user, and the contracted royalty rate for each author. In addition, some authors are paid an upfront fee to account for the time it takes to create their course.
- **Skillshare**⁸⁹ - Designed for creatives, Skillshare operates on a membership model, so your class will have a built-in audience from the start. They also give you tips to help you promote your class to your own community to help you maximize your success. Once you have enrolled more than 25 learners in a class, you become eligible for participation in Skillshare's Partner Program and can earn money through the royalty pool managed by the company – usually a couple of dollars per enrollment. Unlike Udemy, Skillshare sells subscriptions to all of its content rather than to individual courses. Once you are a partner, you'll also get compensated for any new Premium Members you bring to Skillshare through your Teacher Referral link.
- **Udemy**⁹⁰ - Udemy gives you a platform to upload your course along with access to millions of students to market your course to. It provides great SEO rankings in Google search results so your course will be found by people searching for it and it's a tried and tested way of generating passive income. Udemy makes its money by keeping a large percentage of your course sales if your course sells via the marketplace.

Payment provider options

In order to receive payment for your course when you sell it, you'll need to sign up with a payment provider. You'll also need to check with your course hosting program to see what payment providers they support and if they support more than one it may be worth your while to sign up for more than one as this offers your audience more options to pay you.

Here are some payment provider options for you to consider:

- **Paypal**⁹¹ - Paypal is pretty much the standard option for online payments and some people may distrust anyone who doesn't provide PayPal as an option for course payments. Creating a PayPal account is easy and straightforward. Go to the PayPal signup page and enter your email and desired password and then you'll need to integrate this with your course hosting option.
- **Stripe**⁹² - Stripe is probably the second most popular payment provider but where Paypal is accepted pretty much worldwide, Stripe is not available to some countries. So make sure you check what payment providers your preferred course hosting option supports before you sign up with them.
- **Apple Pay**⁹³ **and Google Pay**⁹⁴ - As with Stripe, Apple Pay and Google Pay may not be supported by your course hosting option and are also not available in all regions as a payment solution. Make sure you have alternative payment options for people in regions who can't make payments using these two.

Please remember this is by no means an extensive list, there are literally hundreds of tech tools and programs available on the market, but this will give you an idea of what to look for. Remember the tips I gave you at the beginning of this chapter and do some research before you buy anything.

Now that we've looked at all of the various pieces of tech and programs available to you as a course creator, it's time to start putting those pieces together to create your course. Let's take a look at how to reconstruct a course.

Chapter Four

re·con·struct

to build or assemble (something) again

Reconstructing online courses

Now it's time to move on from the theoretical part of the book. You should by now understand what a redefined online course needs to include and have an idea of what you want to create. This is the practical hands-on part of the process and it's time for you to pull out a pen and perhaps a notepad to make some notes. If you're not a pen and paper person you're welcome to type in the interactive workbook that you get with this book.

There are 3 parts to reconstructing a course: **Preparation, Creation and Construction.**

#1 Preparation phase

In the preparation phase, you're going to put the foundations in place so that when you start creating content you'll have it all mapped out and planned and can get it done in as little time as possible.

It all starts with defining your audience, then everything flows from there. Once you know who your audience is you'll know what type of course to create and the type of content that works best for your course and your audience.

Define your audience

Objective: Determine who you want to serve with your course so you can create a course that serves them best.

Chances are, you already have an idea of who your target audience is for your course. You just need to make this as clear and specific as possible. The more specific you are the better. Why is this important? Well if you have a clearly defined audience you'll attract and connect with the right people - and sell more courses.

Here's an example, say you consider Moms to be your ideal audience. The needs of a Mom with a newborn are very different to a Mom with teens. And even if you pick a Mom with teens, a working Mom with teens may have different needs to a stay-at-home Mom with teens. So you need to make sure you are as specific as possible when identifying your audience.

Take your time answering these questions. Be specific about who your course is meant to serve and then figure out the lifestyle,

behaviours, actions and feelings of your audience. Remember this is all about figuring out their needs so you can build a connection with them. This is the most important foundation for your course to be built on.

Consider your audience and answer the questions below:

1. Who are the people you think your course will best serve?
2. What do their day-to-day lives look like?
3. How much time do you think they'll have to dedicate to your course?
4. What problem do they need you to solve?
5. What is their level of experience with your topic?
6. What keeps them up at night?
7. What is important to them?
8. What is the outcome they'd expect from your course?

For example: These would be my answers if I were creating a course about WordPress:

1. People who have outgrown a more simple website platform like Squarespace or Wix.
2. They have full time jobs and are trying to start a business on the side so their days are spent at a job with a commute to and from work and then very limited family time.
3. They only have a bit of time in the evenings and on weekends to work on their website.
4. They need more functionality than their current website platform can give them and don't want to pay for a web developer.
5. They're fairly comfortable with tech
6. They've had a bad experience with a web developer in the past and want to have control over their own website.
7. Flexibility in both the design and functionality of their website and the ability to maintain and update it themselves.
8. To be able to create and maintain their own wordpress website.

You can answer these questions for your audience in a notepad or in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

What type of course works for you?

Objective: Figure out what type of course to create.

Considering your course topic and the needs of your target audience and what you're comfortable with creating - what type of course works best?

Here are a couple of scenarios to demonstrate this.

- Do you already have your own signature process defined? Then you could either start with a Preview course and build a Signature course bit by bit or go straight into building your Signature course.
- Does the thought of learning new tech overwhelm you? Then you could start with what you know and use Zoom to record a Mini-course or do a simple email challenge.
- Does your audience love to read? Then you could definitely go with an email only course and provide links to things like pdfs in your emails for additional reading material.
- Do you have limited time to dedicate to creating a course? Run a quick challenge with live broadcasts in a private Facebook group.
- Do you want to move away from working one-on-one, with a done-for-you service? Then a done-with-you Optimised service is what you need.
- Does your audience need to prove competency in your topic - perhaps to an employer? You need to create a Certification course.
- Do you love creating and sharing new content? Then a Membership would work well for you.

You see how this works? You'll merge the knowledge you have about your topic, your own expertise and what you know your audience wants and come up with the best type of course for all of these.

For example: My audience doesn't have a lot of time to spend on a course and they are quite tech savvy already so I want to create a mini-course that takes them through the setup and basics of working with WordPress.

Make a note of the type of course you want to create in your notepad or in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

What are you going to name your course?

The next thing you need to do is name your course and there's a lot of conflicting advice out there on what makes a great course title. My advice is not to over complicate it - pick a name and move on to actually creating your course. If you haven't already decided on a name here are some tips:

- Keep it simple and clear to understand. You don't want your course name to be a barrier to getting people to sign up for your course. An unclear course name will result in people instantly moving on thinking it's not for them.
- Use the exact words your audience uses in relation to your topic by getting to know their language. Do a keyword search to see what words and phrases people are looking for on your course topic. I've added some links to a **keyword tool**⁹⁵ you can try on the reference page.
- Put the result in the title and if you're not clear on the result your course offers then try saying "My course teaches my audience this(your topic) so that" and the end of the sentence will be the result your course offers. For this book that would be "My book teaches course creators a doable method to course creation so that they can create their courses without losing their minds."
- Set expectations with your course name. What you name your course should match your course type and content. Certain words lead to certain expectations, for example, the word workshop

indicates that there will be some sort of practical, hands-on ‘work’ involved. Calling a video of you just talking a workshop may be considered misleading.

- Make it even more powerful by conveying some sort of feeling or emotion. Certain words can be used to trigger emotion, excitement, or curiosity and will make your course sound more attractive to your audience. I’ve included a link on the reference page to some **power words**⁹⁶ you can use in your course name.
- Is the domain available for your course name? If you want to use a custom domain for your course check that your name is available as a domain name and buy that domain before naming your course.

And if you’re really stuck you can try a **course name generator**⁹⁷ to help you get some ideas. I’ve added a few for you to try on the reference page.

*For example: My course is not for WordPress experts but it is for people who are comfortable with tech and want to create and maintain their own websites. So I’ll call it **WordPress Tech 101: Create and maintain your first WordPress website***

*Write down the name you’ve chosen for your course on your notepad or in *The Doable Course Planner* workbook you get with this book.*

What type of content works for your course?

Now you need to decide what type of content is the best for your audience and type of course. Considering your course topic, type of course, the needs of your target audience and what you’re comfortable with creating - what type of content will you create?

For example: My audience is short on time so I'm going to create short screencast videos walking them through the setup and maintenance of WordPress and also provide downloadable PDFs with screenshots of the process too.

Make a note of the type of content you want to create in your notepad or in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

Figure out how you are going to add more you

Think back to the foundational elements of a redefined course and one of the most important elements is adding more of yourself to the course. Think about how you're going to support your audience. Will you have weekly live sessions in a Facebook group, or send personal emails to connect with your course attendees.

For example: I'm going to create a short welcome video and a congratulations video for the end of the course. I'll also run weekly Q&A sessions live in a private Facebook group to answer any questions my course attendees have.

Make a note of how you are going to support your audience in your notepad or in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

What are your Tech/Program requirements?

The next step is to figure out if you need to buy any new tech or programs now that you know what type of course content you'll be creating.

Refer back to the chapter on the tech and program requirements for the different types of content for some tips on what you should buy.

For example: I'm going to keep things simple and use the Windows 10 screen recorder for my screencast videos and then record the welcome and congratulations videos with my cell phone using my ring light and edit them in Filmora 10.

*Make a note of the tech/programs that you are going to use to create your content in your notepad or in *The Doable Course Planner* workbook you get with this book.*

Time to outline your course

Now that you've identified the foundational aspects it's time to create your course outline and plan your content creation. You can do this using a pen and notepad, with spider diagrams or mind maps.

Another popular way to do this is to use sticky notes so you can rearrange things as you work through it. *Or you can map it all out in *The Doable Course Planner* you get with this book.*

Start out with a brain dump of all the steps you think people need to take in order to achieve the result of your course. Just list all of the steps and don't worry too much about getting it all organised and in sequence, this is simply an exercise in getting all the steps noted down. These steps are going to form the modules of your course.

Modules are containers for the lessons you teach in your course. So think of a filing cabinet. The entire cabinet is your course, the drawers are the modules and the files in the drawers are the lessons. And if we're going to continue with this analogy then the pages within a file are the pieces of course content ie. videos, pdf downloads etc.

Remember: More content ≠ more value

Your course is supposed to give people a shortcut to the result they are looking for otherwise they would just Google it. More information does not mean more value, so try not to dump too much on them. In fact, if you can make it as concise as possible, your audience will appreciate it (and pay) more.

There's also no definitive number of Modules you should create - that's entirely up to you and your topic or your process. However, having more than 16 modules may make your course appear overwhelming and unmanageable to your audience. If your list has more than 16 steps, try combining a couple of similar or related steps into one. You can of course have less than 16 - it's entirely up to you.

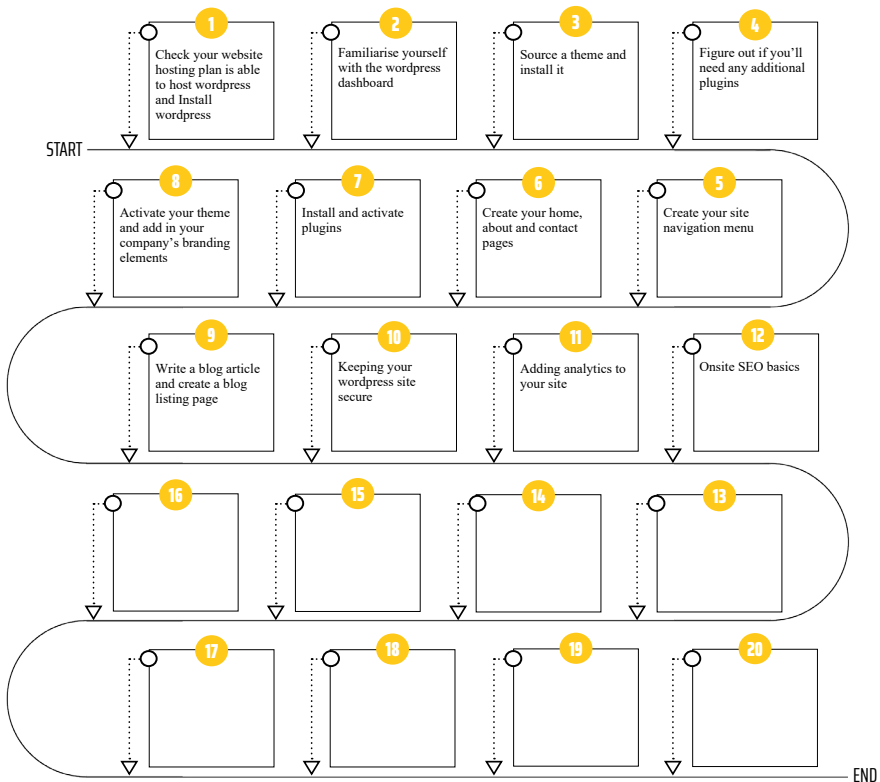
For example: Here are my steps – I have 14 and some of these may get merged into one later:

1. Check your website hosting plan is able to host wordpress
2. Install wordpress
3. Familiarise yourself with the wordpress dashboard
4. Source a theme and install it
5. Figure out if you'll need any additional plugins
6. Activate your theme and add in your company's branding elements
7. Install and activate plugins
8. Create your home, about and contact pages
9. Create your site navigation menu
10. Write a blog article
11. Create a blog listing page
12. Keeping your wordpress site secure
13. Adding Google analytics to your site
14. Onsite SEO basics

Brain dump all of your steps in your notepad or in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

Next, you'll take all the steps you've listed in the previous exercise and create a sequential timeline with them. Step 1 = the first module, step 2 = the second module etc. It sometimes helps to reverse engineer the process; so starting at the end result, work your way backwards to get to where your course will start.

For example: Here is my timeline using The Doable Course Planner workbook. My steps are pretty short but the fields allow you to type in paragraphs if you need to. As you can see I now only have 12 steps as I merged the first two steps on my list and the two about blogs:

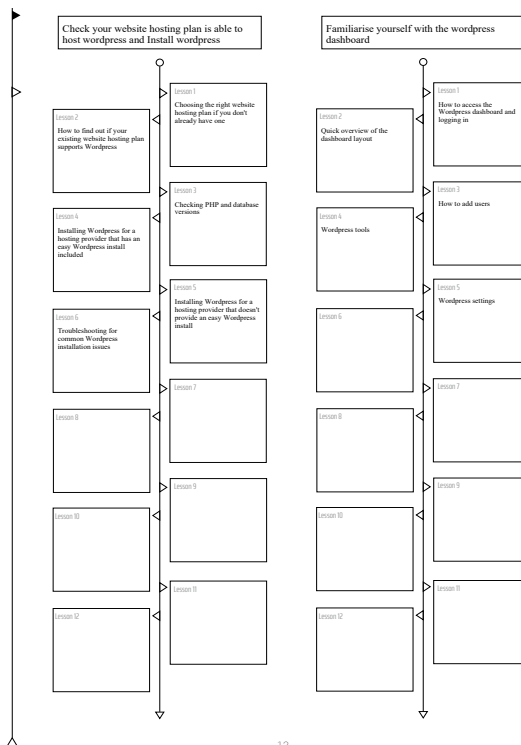


Now take all of your steps and create a sequential timeline for them in your notepad or in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

The lessons within the modules

Now that you have your modules outlined, the next step is to organise the steps required to achieve each milestone into separate lessons. Bite-sized lessons work best and as with modules, there is no definitive number of lessons to create per module. However, each lesson should deliver a specific result. This helps people feel like they're making progress as they move through the lessons.

For example: Here the first two of my modules broken down into bite-sized lessons using The Doable Course Planner workbook:



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Now create your lessons for each of your modules in your notepad or in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

Then you're going to flesh out the lesson content. As you do this, make sure you take a critical look at each lesson and remove any unnecessary steps or concepts. Remember you don't want to give them too much information. You can't pack your 10 years of experience into a 6 module course. You need to think back to what it was like as a beginner (or where your audience is at experience-wise) and what you needed to know at that point.

For example: Here is the lesson plan for my first lesson fleshed out into more detail using The Doable Course Planner workbook:

MODULE TITLE: Check your website hosting plan is able to host wordpress and Install wordpress	
LESSON TITLE: Choosing the right website hosting plan if you don't already have one	
GOALS: To explain that not all website hosting plans are good for Wordpress websites - explain why and tell them what to look for in a website hosting plan.	ASSESSMENT: 3 question quiz on the main points of the lesson
LEAD-IN: Following on from the course welcome video - look them with how a bad provider can result in slow speeds and security issues so this is important	TASKS/ACTIVITIES: Show them a couple of hosting providers offers on their websites so they can see what I am talking about and know what to look for
KEY POINTS: 1. What is a website hosting provider 2. What Wordpress needs to run efficiently 3. What to look for in a website hosting plan	ANY REFERENCE LINKS 4 links to hosting providers whose plans I want to show (good and bad): https://www.godaddy.com/ https://www.101domain.com/ https://www.hostinger.com/promo/12hr17 https://www.pengwin.com/plans/ https://www.101host.com/
CLOSE: Summary of why it's important to select a good website hosting provider	LIST OF TOOLS NEEDED Screen recorder and USB microphone
	RESOURCES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDF Workbook/eBook <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation Slides <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Video/Webinar <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio file/podcast <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quiz/Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text" value="Transcript"/>

Now flesh out your lessons for each of your modules in your notepad or in the interactive workbook you get with this book.

Write out your video scripts

Once you have your lessons planned out it's time to write your video scripts and in the Creation Phase, you'll learn how you can create 4 different pieces of content from this single element.

Try to follow the same sequence with all of your videos. Start off with an overview of the lesson which gives your audience an idea of what they'll be learning. If you skip this, they may be unsure where you're going and won't know what's important and what isn't.

Here are some tips for your video scripts:

Remember **the rule of three** (people remember things better in threes (more on this in the next chapter) so try to stick to three main points for people to remember per lesson. And then end with a summary or recap of what you covered in the lesson.

We all have **cognitive biases** - the primacy and recency effect - when it comes to what we remember. This means that we pay attention at the beginning of a lesson (primacy) and also remember the ending (recency). So the lead-in and recap will help people remember all your lesson key points.

Lose the industry jargon and use **universally understandable language**. That way your audience will understand you clearly and be more likely to achieve the results they desire.

For example: Here is a script for the first video lesson of the first module outlined using The Doable Course Planner workbook. I now know exactly what I want to say in this video as well as how many slides I'll need to create for the screencast part of this video:

MODULE TITLE:	Check your website hosting plan is able to host wordpress and Install wordpress	
LESSON TITLE:	Choosing the right website hosting plan if you don't already have one	
VIDEO TITLE:	The basics of website hosting for Wordpress	
LEAD-IN	ON-SCREEN/ACTION	
Choose the wrong hosting provider for your wordpress website and you may end up with a site that is slow or unresponsive or even compromised security-wise.	Switch between my face and slides	
MAIN SECTION		
<p>What is a website hosting provider? A website hosting provider is a business that provides the technologies and services needed for the website or webpage to be viewed in the Internet.</p> <p>What does Wordpress need to be able to run efficiently? Wordpress needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PHP version 7.4 or greater - MySQL version 5.6 or greater OR MariaDB version 10.1 or greater - HTTPS support (SSL) - Web (server disk) space <p>Shared hosting is like renting an apartment in an apartment block. You rent space on a server to host your website. With dedicated hosting you have your own server - but this costs a lot more. The best option is managed hosting which is the same as shared hosting with the added benefit of the hosting provider configuring the server specially for WordPress, plus they also handle security, backups and updates for you.</p>		
RECAP	SLIDES TO CREATE	
Not only does the 3-point lighting system make you look good on camera but it also results in professional-looking videos.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro slide (thumbnail) 2. Slide with dictionary description of website hosting provider 3. Slide with bullet points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PHP version 7.4 or greater - MySQL version 5.6 or greater OR MariaDB version 10.1 or greater - HTTPS support (SSL) - Web space 4. Shared hosting vs dedicated hosting vs managed hosting 5. Recap slide 	
CLOSING		
So can you see how important it is to choose the right hosting provider. The Managed hosting option will save you a lot of time and money.		

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Now go and write those video scripts. You can use a Google doc, or write them out by hand in your notebook, or use the video script worksheet in the workbook you get with this book.

Quizzes and assessments

Planning your quizzes and assessments up front helps you ensure that they're properly aligned with your course content and lesson objectives. Also if you ask great questions, you'll get useful data about your audience's understanding of the course content.

I'd recommend at least 3 questions but not more than 12 per lesson because at that point it gets too long and people will drop off or just add random information. A couple of mini-quizzes spread throughout the module works better than one long one at the end.

Before you start building your quizzes you need to be clear on the following:

- What do you want them to walk away knowing?
- What specific concepts do you want to reinforce?
- What type of question would work best for your requirements?

Plan for questions that require thinking in different ways. Mix in recall and comprehension questions together with application questions. That way you can figure out where they're having problems. ie. Can they recall info, but not apply it.

For example: Here is a quiz for the first video lesson of the first module outlined using The Doable Course Planner workbook. When I'm ready to create my quizzes in my course platform - all I need to do is copy and paste the text from the quiz planner.

MODULE TITLE:	Check your website hosting plan is able to host wordpress and Install wordpress
LESSON TITLE:	Choosing the right website hosting plan if you don't already have one
QUIZ GOALS:	QUESTION 3:
To make sure they understand what website hosting is and what to look for	Which is the best option for Wordpress hosting?
	OPTION A:
	Shared server hosting
	OPTION B:
	Dedicated server hosting
	OPTION C:
	Managed server hosting
QUESTION 1:	OPTION D:
What can go wrong if you choose the wrong hosting provider?	None of the above
OPTION A:	QUESTION 4:
Your website may be slow	
OPTION B:	OPTION A:
You wont have to maintain it yourself	
OPTION C:	OPTION B:
Your website security may be compromised	
OPTION D:	OPTION C:
Options A and C	
QUESTION 2:	OPTION D:
What are the benefits of managed hosting?	
OPTION A:	RESULT/CONCEPT REINFORCEMENT:
The server is optimally configured for Wordpress	This quiz will reinforce the point that managed hosting is the best option for Wordpress website hosting.
OPTION B:	
They maintain the server	
OPTION C:	
They perform backups on your behalf	
OPTION D:	
Options A, B and C	

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Now go and create your quiz questions. You can use a Google doc, or write them out by hand in your notebook or in the Quiz & Assessment sheet in The Doable Course Planner workbook you get with this book.

Let's create a plan of action

A course is not usually an immediate money maker and most course creators find themselves trying to create a course along with their normal day to day tasks.

So the number one challenge for most course creators is finding the time to create their course content. And it's really not about *finding* the time, it's about making the best use of whatever time you do have. That's why the next step is for you to create a *plan of action*.

Creating and more importantly sticking to a schedule to get your course content created can be hard because - life! But once you have things organised and scheduled, you'll see just how helpful a plan of action can be.

The Doable Course Content Plan

You need a plan of action that works specifically for you and not something that's compiled by someone who has no idea how busy your days are.

You need a plan of action that makes you feel like you can stick to it even after a long day at work or a busy day with clients. Something that doesn't require a massive time commitment that'll leave you feeling completely unmotivated - so you end up on the couch in front of your favourite show.

So I'm going to show you how to create a *Doable Course Content Plan*. This will help you get that content created without having to sacrifice too much time in a probably already busy day.

In order to create a Doable Course Content Plan I want you to be thinking "What can I do every day to move my course forward?" And if you only have 20 minutes a day, work with that. Plan for the tired version of you and that way you won't get derailed when you have a bad day. If you're a morning person, perhaps you can find some time in the morning to work on your course. If you're a night owl - perhaps you can schedule some time after the kids have gone to bed. Whatever works best for you,

The main goal of the Doable Course Content Plan is to get your course content scheduled. And I'm going to give you 2 powerful tips to help make this process as easy and stress-free as possible.

Tip #1 - Batch it

Batching content creation is the best way to *get.it.done!* The art of batching involves doing a lot of one task at a time. Creating course content requires a mix of different types of tasks and it's much easier to work on one type at a time rather than switching between different tasks. This means that trying to record and edit one video all at once is not the best use of your time.

You want to get into a flow, where you focus only on one phase of the process at once, then take a break before you move on to the next phase.

So how does batching work? Well, let's take recording your course videos as an example. You schedule a day to record all of your course videos at once. This allows you to do something like renting a location for a day, get your hair and makeup done and your outfit dry cleaned in preparation for your recording day.

Don't have a full day to spare? Try recording a lesson a day - and if your lessons are short this is totally doable in 20 minutes a day. Once your videos have been recorded you can move on to the next phase and start editing them.

Tip #2 Create 4 pieces of content from 1

This is also known as content repurposing and let me explain how it works. If you've followed the process in this book up until this point - you should have your video scripts written out for each of your lessons. From these scripts, you're going to create 4 pieces of content.

1. Starting with a **video** - take your script and record the video - whether that's a talking head or screencast video (you can use the text from your script to design slides and do a voiceover).
2. From the video, you can very easily create an **audio** file. Most video editing tools will allow you to export a video as an mp3 audio file.
3. Then you can create a **transcript** from your video using something like rev.com or otter.ai. You can add this as on-screen text to your course hosting platform. If you stick closely to your video script during the video recording process then you could skip this step and just use your script for the transcript.
4. And lastly - you can take that transcript (or your script) and use it to create a **downloadable pdf**.

So what starts off as a script quite easily becomes 4 pieces of content.

Script = Video > Audio > Transcript > Downloadable PDF

Can you see how powerful this is and how quickly you can get all of your course content created? As long as you've done your preparation and scheduled your batched tasks - you can get your course up and running very quickly.

Here's what you need to do to create your Doable Course Content Plan:

Step #1: Make a list of the content you need to create.

Step #2: Break each of those content types into separate steps. For example, for videos, the process may be, design slides for the video (either for a slideshare video or to add visual interest to a talking head video), record the video, edit the raw footage and add the slides (if you didn't use them during the recording).

Step #3: Add each step as a batched task to your calendar. It's as easy as that.

Case Study: This is the exact process that one of my clients followed and we were able to get his entire course set up and ready to sell in just over a month.

When Dr Glenn Vo approached me all he had was a course outline and his scripts written out.

While he recorded his videos, I took his scripts and transformed them into an interactive PDF workbook. Then as soon as his recordings were done, I edited his videos and created the video files and audio files at the same time.

Next I setup his course platform - customised it to match his branding and created his modules and lessons. Then I uploaded all of his videos, audio files and PDF workbook and created. Lastly I added his video script (as he stuck very closely to his script when he recorded his videos) as on-screen text and created his quizzes within the course platform. Course done and ready to sell!

[You can view more details on Dr Vo's case study if you click here](#) or access the link on the reference page⁹⁸.

Now get started on your Doable Course Content Plan. You can use your calendar, a spreadsheet, a Trello board or you could use The Doable Course Planner you get with this book.

#2 Creation phase

Depending on the type of course, who your audience is and what type of content you've decided to create, it's time to start creating that content. And if you've planned and scheduled it all out then this shouldn't take you too long to do.

In this chapter, I'll talk you through the Doable Course Content Plan where you get to create 4 pieces of content from 1. We'll work through the process of creating your video, then audio, transcript and downloadable PDF.

Script = Video > Audio > Transcript > Downloadable PDF

For each type of content, I've given you tips and tricks that I've used both for myself in my own business and for my clients. They'll help you get the very best content you can using the tools you have.

Recording your videos

Let's start with creating videos for your course, whether they're talking head videos or slideshows with voiceover.

Before you hit the record button...

- If you'll be recording a slideshare video, design your slides in your preferred slide program.
- Read through your script out loud. The spoken word is different to the written word and some words don't sound great together when spoken. For example, the 'k' sound followed by that same sound in a word that begins with a 'k' or 'q'. Try to say this out loud "let's bake quick cupcakes", doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, does it?
- Get your script ready to go. You can load it up on a teleprompter or even create a bullet point list on a post-it note that you can stick to your phone/camera or add it to the notes area of your presentation program.
- Do a test recording. Set up your camera and microphone (or phone) in the best place for you to record and do a couple of test recordings of yourself talking. Then check what your recordings look like on a PC if that's where people will be watching your course videos. Make sure that you can be seen and heard clearly.

When you're ready to start recording...

- Check yourself out in a mirror before you start recording, check your teeth especially if you're wearing lipstick, make sure your hair's ok and all of your shirt buttons are buttoned.
- When you're starting out you may find it difficult to remember your script. So do it the same way professional actors do it, in

multiple takes. Record the same sentence over and over till you get it right. I promise, it'll get easier as you go along.

- Smile, especially at the beginning of your video. This makes you come across as more approachable and likeable (even in a voiceover).
- Try to behave '*over the top*' - pretend you're Italian for a day (and if you are Italian - you be you). Use facial expressions and hand gestures that make you appear animated. People will zone out if you sit perfectly still and speak in a monotone.
- Try... to... speak... slowly - even if it feels really silly. What feels slow to you sounds clearer on camera. This is especially important if your audience are not natural English speakers.
- Hydrate before you record - a dry mouth doesn't look or sound good so have some water before you start recording and keep some water on hand if your mouth gets dry during recording.
- Prepare your props or tools - and line them up somewhere within reach in the order you'll need them. ie. If you're going to be referring to a quote in a book, have the book within reach and a bookmark at the page you need to read the quote from. Nobody wants to watch you paging through a book trying to find a quote.
- Don't ramble on - people have very short attention spans so keep it short and to the point. If your video demonstrates a simple technique, try to make it 2 to 5 minutes. If it's you talking through a topic, make it a maximum of 30 minutes. If it needs to be more than 30 minutes, try to introduce breaks with something visually interesting. This gives the viewer breathing time between steps so they can pause the video if needed.
- Leave space for editing - try to leave 5-10 second gaps between sentences where you might want to cut away or add in a slide. This is helpful during editing.
- And lastly but most importantly... practice, practice, practice.

Camera tips

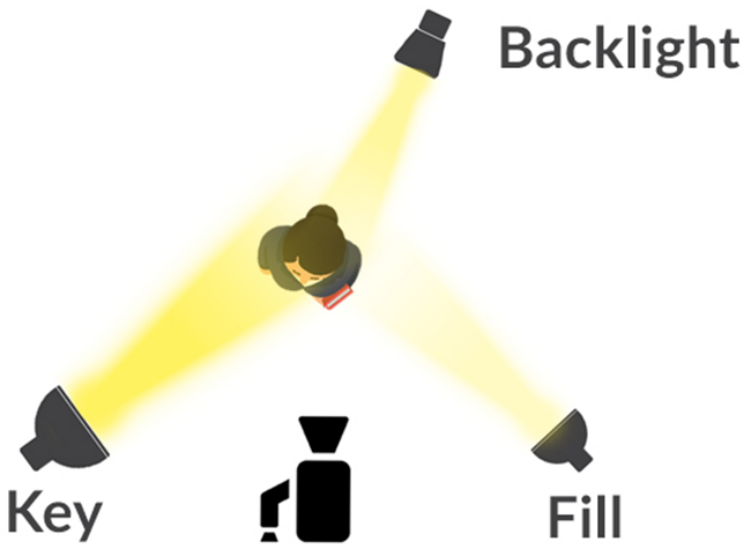
No need for fancy tech, but you should try to get the very best out of the tech you have. Here are some tips to help you do exactly that.

- If you are using your phone, shoot with your phone horizontally which creates a widescreen look so you don't get the black bars down the side of your video.
- Also if you're using your phone (or laptop) - put it on airplane mode and make sure all notifications are switched off so you don't get notifications popping up and ruining your recording.
- Look at the camera lens while you're recording. It's a little disconcerting for your audience if your eyes are looking elsewhere. It'll create distance as they won't feel that you are talking directly to them which is the opposite of building a connection. If you struggle with this one try sticking a photo of a loved one next to the camera eye and talk to that instead.
- Try to keep the camera steady and avoid shaky footage as it makes people feel seasick.
- Think about framing. It might seem natural to sit smack-dab in the centre of your video, but if you're going to be adding text overlays, it might make more sense to sit slightly to the side. Or leave enough space between you and that camera that you can zoom in or out or reposition yourself in editing and add those text overlays.
- Mind your head. Don't leave too much space above your head, but don't cut off the top of their head either.
- If you need to record close-ups of something other than your face. For example, if you are showing a painting technique, or making something by hand, you don't have to film the cutaways during the demonstration. You can shoot them afterwards and join it all up during editing.

Lighting tips

One of the most important things to consider when recording course videos is the lighting. The three-point lighting technique is a standard method used by pros and is pretty easy for you to implement yourself. As the name suggests, it requires you to use 3 lights; a key light, a fill light and a backlight. And you can use lighting you may already have at home. I'd recommend what I call 'Pixar' lamps (I think the proper name is a Swing Arm Desk Lamp). These are great because you can angle the lighting with them.

This is what the three-point lighting technique looks like:



The key light is positioned at a 45° angle to where you are sitting/standing. This is the main light source and should be bright enough to be the only source of light if necessary. So if you have some great natural light coming in from a window that could be your key light.

The fill light is positioned on the opposite side also at a 45° angle. This light softens the amount of shadow on your face cast by the key light.

The backlight is positioned behind you and slightly to one side (almost directly opposite the fill light). This creates depth and separates you from the background.

If you don't have three lights to use you can probably get away with just two, depending on how bright your key light is, you may not need the fill light. Quick tip if you're recording near a smart TV and are short a light. Search YouTube for videos of a pure white background - then your TV works pretty well as a light source. Also if you're skipping the backlight, try to keep a little distance between yourself and the background. If you're filming in front of a wall, don't stand right up against it. Rather take a couple of steps forward to prevent casting a shadow.

If you're using natural light try to make sure that you record at around the same time of the day (if recording on different days) and under the same conditions. Recording on a cloudy day vs a bright and sunny day will result in very different footage which will require correcting in editing. And if it's a cloudy day with clouds moving across the sun, you may end up with patchy footage.

How to look good on camera

- If you're using a laptop, record with it upright and make sure the camera is at a 90° angle. Tilting the screen forward or backwards can make you look like you either have a double-chin or massive forehead. Not a good look on anyone!
- Don't sit too close to the camera. Just as in real life - being right up face-to-face with a stranger can make people feel uncomfortable.
- If you're using natural lighting, morning light is usually softer. Or if you have white sheer curtains these can help diffuse the light and make midday sun softer.
- If you're recording outside - step into a shaded area to avoid harsh lighting on your face. Wearing a hat or cap is going to cast your face in shadow and you may need some additional lighting so people can see you properly.
- Hungry tummy noises and gurgling guts may pick up on the audio. Make sure you have something to eat and drink before you start recording.
- Patterned clothing like pinstripes, chevron, plaid, and houndstooth check can confuse the camera causing a weird pattern (it's called moiré).
- Dress to match your brand and your course topic. Wearing a suit and tie will send a different message than a t-shirt of your favourite band. Also remember that when you are comfortable, you look comfortable.
- If it's a bright sunny day and you're shooting outside, wearing white will cause light to bounce off you and cause a halo effect.
- Wearing black tends to absorb too much light and it can drain the colour from your face.
- Bright red sometimes '*bleeds*' on camera, giving off a slight, hazy halo.

- Don't wear green if you are using a green screen.
- You should also try to avoid wearing any colour that closely matches your skin tone. It'll wash you out, making your facial features disappear. Or it can cause an optical illusion of sorts, making viewers think you're nude. Eek!
- Colours that are best for the camera are solid colours in muted or rich jewel tones such as blue, purple, grey, navy, coral or emerald green.
- Find a comfortable way to hold your hands. A great place to hold your hands is above the waistline, with all fingers touching or clasped. This is fine as long as it looks natural. Avoid holding your hands near the groin area.
- Don't wear jewellery that rattles or jingles as it'll mess with your sound. Also be aware of any noises made by your clothing, especially if you're using a lapel mic. This also includes the movement of your hair over the lapel mic.
- If you have insufficient lighting you will look older. Period. Low lighting darkens things. So if you'd like to look younger you need decent lighting, no matter what your natural skin colour is. Colours also look drab in low light.
- Standing directly under a light is one of the most unflattering placements for a light source, as it carves out every imperfection on the face.
- Similarly lighting directly below the face will give you a craggy-faced look (there's a reason a torch under your chin in the dark. gives people a good scare).
- Having lighting directly behind you is going to throw your whole face in shadow and if you're using auto-focus on your camera - it won't know what to focus on.
- Worried about glare on your eyeglasses? If you're using the 3 point lighting technique you should be fine. If you only have one light source, try moving it to one side of the camera and

raise it a little higher than eye level. This helps remove the glare on eyeglasses while still adding definition to the facial features.

- Check your posture. Standing or sitting up straight not only makes you appear slimmer it also helps you appear energised and engaged.
- And if you're using Zoom to record your videos you're in luck. There's a little-known setting on Zoom⁹⁷ that allows you to apply a filter to your video display that gives your face a softer look and minimises the appearance of imperfections.

Sound Tips

If people can't hear you they can't learn from you. And bad audio with a background buzz is a big problem - especially for people with Misophonia which is a condition in which a person is overly sensitive to sounds. So the goal is to get the very best audio you can for your course.

Let's look at some basic tips for preparing and recording good quality audio.

- Get rid of ambient noise. Ambient noise is the daily hum of things around you, so the aircon, or water fountain nearby. These don't sound good in a recording and are nearly impossible to edit out afterwards.
- Clap loudly at the beginning of your recording. This is especially helpful if you are recording your audio separately from your video using an external mic. The clap will create a spike in your audio recording that you can use to line up your audio and video during editing.
- Keep your microphone at a proper distance, too close and you may sound like a dodgy heavy breather or like you're speaking Parseltongue with exaggerated "p" and "s" sounds (I see you Harry Potter fans). Too far away from the mic and it'll sound like you recorded in the bathroom.
- If you're going to record audio regularly, and are looking for high-quality results, it may be time to invest in a good microphone. Please have a look at the section on Sound for tips on what to look for in a Mic.
- You must test your recordings in each recording session by recording a short piece of test audio. Because, no matter how many times you perfect your settings, things can crop up

unexpectedly. Maybe an audio setting gets changed accidentally, or your voice doesn't project as loudly as it did the first time, or you encounter a hardware issue. It happens. So always take the time to record at least 30 seconds of test audio before you jump into your script recording.

- Listen to your test audio with headphones. Headphones isolate ambient noise and help you hear your recorded audio clearly. Because they're worn over the ears, you get the closest, most realistic playback of your audio. Course attendees may listen to your course videos with headphones so you'll want to hear exactly what they'll hear.
- Keep it consistent. Implement a consistent recording process to ensure that there is no inconsistency in your audio recordings.
- Use the same room and equipment every time, plus ideally, keep the equipment set up at the same place in the room. And if you have to move the equipment between recordings - use some tape on the floor or desk to mark exactly where it was positioned. Use the same microphone and audio recording software settings every time. Keep a consistent distance and angle with the microphone while recording.

Recording Screencast video tips

- Clean up your pc desktop if it'll be shown in your recording. If you have a photo of you and your bestie on a beach sipping cocktails - you might not want your course audience to see that or the gazillion icons you have.
- If you're going to embed your webcam as a way to make your screen recording more personal (ie, have a small circle or block with your face on-screen with your slides), consider where that small video image of you will appear in relation to the images and text on your slides. Some screencast recording tools allow you to reposition the webcam overlay.
- As with recording any video or audio, make sure you do a test run to make sure everything is working properly before starting on your script.
- Close all other apps and tabs which will ensure there are no annoying notifications popping up halfway through your recording. It'll also free up your computer's processing power so that there won't be any glitches.
- If your screencasting program includes annotation tools, these are a great way to focus on something important you'd like to highlight using your mouse or drawing with a pen tool.
- Move your mouse only when necessary. Moving the cursor around as if you're talking with your hands is going to leave your viewers confused and unsure of where they should look.
- Watching someone scroll up and down quickly is disorienting. Rather install the Google Chrome SmoothScroll extension⁹⁸, which will smooth the scrolling movement and not disorient your audience.

You can improve the quality of your videos just by applying these simple tips. Creating professional-looking videos isn't magic but it does take some practice.

Additional tips and considerations for creating course videos

Getting great presentation slides

Whether it's a slideshow with your voiceover or the occasional slide used in a talking head video, presentation slides are a canvas you can use to paint your story. They provide visual interest and keep your audience engaged. And the very process of creating slides can help you to prepare for your presentation or video.

You can get some great slide templates in Canva or buy them on sites like Creative Market or create your own.

Here are some tips for getting the best slides for course videos whether you're using a template or starting from scratch using your own branding:

- Use the **rule of three**. Stop, drop, and roll; lights, camera, action; ready, set, go – these sets are just some examples of the rule of 3 in use. It's a psychological trick - people tend to remember everything better in threes. Steve Jobs applied the rule of 3 in nearly every presentation and product launch he did. If it worked for him it'll definitely work for you. So how do you use the rule of 3 with your presentation slides? Divide your slides into three parts - for example, you can introduce a concept with three benefits. Not only will this help your audience remember your points, but it'll be easier for you to remember too!
- **Let your slides support your point** - not make it. Text and images are only there to support what you are saying in your video. One of the best ways to do this is by portraying your idea with a single word/phrase or image on the slide, then you discuss this deeper while talking. Less is more and strong visuals will go a long way. Just make sure that your images match the text and support the concepts you are verbally discussing. Don't be

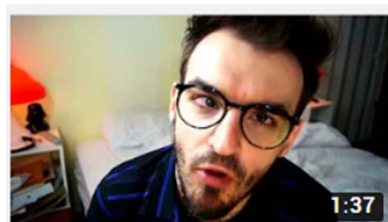
afraid to fill a whole slide with a picture in order to keep the message focused.

- **Create a consistent look and feel.** In a good presentation slide deck, each slide feels like part of the same story. That means using the same or related fonts, colours and imagery across all your slides. Using slide templates can be a great way to create consistency. I like to create a few slides to hold sample graphic elements and type, then copy what I need from those slides as I go.
- **Avoid too many animations.** Animations are tricky to get right and can slow your presentation down, especially if you're adding a transition animation between each slide which may lead to 'dead air' during your video. They may also distract your audience while you're trying to explain something. However, there are scenarios in which the use of animations makes sense, for example, if you're highlighting the functionality of a product, or building a story with illustrations, or even subtly animating graphs or statistics. In those scenarios, the animation helps you with your objective. However, if you're using animations just for the sake of using animations, it probably means your presentation is better off without them.
- **Optimise the layout.** Most people in the western world read left to right, top to bottom. Keep this in mind when designing your slides. Keep the most important information top left as that's what people will see first. Use text size and different fonts or colours to distinguish headlines from body text.
- **Keep the colours simple.** Stick to simple light and dark colours. Brightly coloured text can cause eye strain, so use those colours sparingly. Dark text on a light background or light text on a dark background works best. Try to stick to no more than two text colours per slide, a highlight colour for headings and a body text colour.

- **Choose your fonts wisely.** Sans-serif fonts (ie. Helvetica, Tahoma, Verdana) are easier to read on screens. This is a **sans serif font**; **this is a serif font**; *this is a decorative font* and **this is a slab font**. There are plenty of font options to choose from just keep legibility in mind when you're making your pick. Try to stick to no more than two fonts per slide. Fonts have very different personalities and emotional impacts, so make sure your font matches the tone, purpose, and content of your course.
- **Avoid over-styling.** The easiest and most effective ways to draw attention to text are **Bold**, *Italics*, Underline or a **change in colour**. Our eyes are naturally drawn to things that stand out, but if you use all of these options in one slide you won't know where to look first. Try to only use one of these at a time.

3 essential slides to design

#1 A cover slide/video overlay. A cover slide can be used as both the starting slide in your slide deck and the overlay image for your course videos. This is probably the most important slide as it's the first thing your course attendees see. The point is, the title slide needs to look good. To give you an example of where it can be used - if you've ever uploaded a video to YouTube you may have seen that YouTube automatically selects a frame from the video to use as the thumbnail image for the video. And they're not always flattering - very often it picks a frame where your eyes are closed or you're making a weird face. Like this:



Disclaimer: I picked these images at random from Youtube.

So what do you need to include on your cover slide?

- Your lesson/video title: It's best to use a simple font in a large size as this is the easiest to read on-screen.
- Subtitle: Use a font in a smaller size than your title. Expand on your title so your audience knows exactly what to expect from the video.
- Your logo (Optional): You can include your logo, but if people have signed up for your course they probably know who you are.
- An eye-catching image (Optional): Your image shouldn't make your title hard to read, but it should help catch your audience's attention and match your topic.

#2 An Index/Agenda slide. This slide gives your audience an idea of what you'll be covering in this video and outlines the main points you will be covering.

#3 A basic content slide design. While it's great to have a strong cover design you need to match it with a much simpler content slide. The K.I.S.S.principle works best (Keep It Simple Stupid). Important considerations for your content slides are:

- Remember the rule of three
- Make the body text at least 30 points (preferably more) in size
- Be sure to match your fonts and colours with your cover slide
- If it's a text-heavy slide (lots of text) limit the visual elements to one
- Create breaks between text-heavy slides by using divider slides (this also works well when transitioning from one topic to the next)
- You should avoid using white text on a dark background on text-heavy slides - forcing people to fixate on white text for a long time can cause eye-strain

What about music?

If you want to use music in your course videos here's what you need to know.

If you're considering adding your favourite artist's new track. I hate to break it to you but you may be breaking the law.

But surely I can use any music in my videos as long as I credit the artist?

Unfortunately, that's a myth. You need to get permission from the copyright holder to use any copyrighted material. Even for non-commercial projects.

Music copyright laws can be tricky. Often the copyright is jointly owned by the record label and the artist. This means that you need to get two licenses if you want to use a commercial song. To do this you can search for the record label information on Wikipedia. If they're not listed there you could try reaching out to the artist directly.

Some new artists may be open to you using their music for a fee, but it may get really expensive for you to license an established artist's track, so make sure you have a backup plan.

This process sounds very complicated - isn't there an easier way?

Yes, there is – you could use music available under Creative Commons license. This is music that artists have decided to share for free. There are different kinds of creative commons licenses, so make sure you read the fine print.

Some artists require that you give them credit. While others specify that you may not use the music in commercial projects.

Another option is to buy royalty-free stock music from a music library. There are plenty of music library sites with millions of songs to choose from. Some offer subscriptions with unlimited downloads, while others charge a fee per track.

Here is a list of 5 great places to find music for your course videos and I've included the links to these on the reference page.

Youtube Audio Library¹⁰¹ - YouTube has a massive audio library and you can sort by genre, instrument, duration, attribution and mood. There is even a “popularity” filter for you to view which songs are most downloaded by other users.

Epidemic Sound¹⁰² - Epidemic Sound, offers some of the best music in the business and has easy-to-use search functionality. They also bundle all the legal rights you'll need in a simple license that you can use across all platforms.

AudioBlocks¹⁰³ - An Audioblocks subscription gives you access to unlimited downloads of hundreds of thousands of tracks, loops, sound effects, and collections. Their search functionality allows you to use a slider to specify the length of a track which is super useful.

Free Music Archive¹⁰⁴ - Free Music Archive, is a massive library of background music and sounds for all types of content. All tracks are legal to use in a variety of situations that would otherwise be restricted by copyright laws. They have more than a thousand public domain tracks (licensed for commercial use) and thousands more licenced under Creative Commons.

Soundcloud¹⁰⁵ - If you search Soundcloud for tracks that are licensed 'To Share' you'll find a great selection of music. Most of Soundcloud's music is licensed under Creative Commons, which means that you are free to use the tracks as long as you follow the guidelines set by the artist.

Make sure that the music you use in your course videos complies with copyright/creative commons licensing. That way you won't wake up one morning to find out that Youtube has shut down your channel (if you're hosting your course videos there). It'll also help avoid any legal issues down the line.

All about images

If you have been Googling images and using them on your website or in your course material, you may be breaking the law. Maybe not 'Breaking Bad' level breaking the law, but still, nobody wants to find their personal Insta post picture adorning someone else's course download.

So please be considerate and follow both the laws AND the rules of common etiquette when using photos, pictures, or artwork that you didn't create. As of September 2018, Google now provides links to image creator, credit and copyright notice metadata, (whenever available) for images on Google Images. For more information, see their blog post on Image Rights Metadata in Google Images¹⁰⁴.

The good news is that there are plenty of websites that provide beautiful stock photography that you can use. Many of these sites provide images that are free from copyright restrictions or licensed under creative commons public domain dedication however some may require attribution which is easy enough to do and will be explained on the site you choose to use.

Here are some free image resources for you to use instead (links on the reference page).

Canva¹⁰⁷ - Canva has a pretty extensive library of stock images - and a lot of these are free (the image will have a tag that says free on the thumbnail). For Canva Free users, Pro content is watermarked. And it'll cost \$1 for every item of watermarked content in your design (this gives you a One Design Use license). You'll need to pay for new licenses to use the same content in different designs. With Canva Pro and Canva for Enterprise users, there is nothing more to pay and no watermarks. You can reuse Pro content in as many designs, as many times as you want.

Pexels¹⁰⁸ - Pexels provides a hand-picked selection of photos uploaded by users or sourced from free image websites, they are high quality and completely free stock photos licensed under their own Pexels license.

Unsplash¹⁰⁹ - Unsplash provides beautiful, free photos uploaded by their community of photographers. Their images have been used in everything from Apple keynotes to a default theme shipped with WordPress.

Working with fonts

The fonts you choose to use in your course material can have a huge impact on the way your course material is perceived. Try to make sure that you choose fonts that reflect your brand as well as the content of your course. If your course is on a serious topic like dealing with depression - then using a quirky, fun font will cause a jarring effect.

Back to basics, what is a font?

Also referred to as a typeset, a font is a collection of typed characters with a similar design. The collection usually includes lowercase and uppercase letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and symbols. But you may also find with some of the decorative fonts you only get upper or lowercase characters.

Changing the font can alter the look and feel of your text. Some fonts are designed to be easy to read, while others are designed to add a unique style.

Most software programs and operating systems have licenses to use certain fonts and you can purchase other fonts or find free ones online but be sure to check the usage licenses for any font you download online.

Google Fonts¹¹⁰

Google has a pretty extensive database of free fonts that you can download. You can filter fonts using the drop-down menus on the menu bar and once you find a font that you like, simply click on the blue “Add to Collection” button.

Here are a few general tips to help you use fonts wisely so your course content looks professional:

- Legibility is the most important aspect when it comes to fonts. Make sure that the fonts you choose are legible in all of the areas you use them - especially if you use decorative fonts.
- Limit the number of fonts. There are so many types of fonts available and I know it's really hard to choose just one or two, but it's best if you limit yourself to three max. You can still use

the bold and italics options you get with each font. To give you an idea, you could use a sans serif for body copy and a *fun, decorative font for headlines*

- Be consistent with your font styling. Don't use different alignments and always use the same font, size, weight and colour throughout.

Post Production

This is what happens after you've recorded your videos.

The 5 step post-production process

1. Editing the video
2. Creating an audio file from a video
3. Generating a transcript from a video/audio file
4. Creating downloadable content from your script/transcript

Step #1 - editing the video

Fortunately, video editing isn't like the days of splicing and cutting reels of actual film – one wrong snip and your footage was ruined. Today - no matter how crazy you get with editing, your original footage stays entirely as it was (just make sure to make a backup copy). So you are free to practice as much as you need to.

Before you start editing, watch your footage all the way through. As you run through it, make notes of edits you want to make and include the timestamp of each edit.

Here are some of the *basic video editing skills* that you'll need to master:

- How to **trim** the footage - for example, if you weren't prepared when the video started recording and messed up your first sentence? Trim it.
- How to **slice/cut** out unwanted footage - Need to reorder your points so that they make more sense. Slice and switch the pieces around.

- How to **add in slides/titles** - forgot to include a slide to explain a complicated point in the recording? Just add the slide in as an overlay.
- How to **add subtitles/captions** - you can do this in editing software or use an external tool for captions.
- How to **add music/other audio**

Some editing tips & preparing to export audio

- We're all human and you'll be tempted to remove not only the obvious mistakes but also any annoying filler words. But removing every "um", "ah" or "ok" will make you look and sound unnatural. Only cut out filler words that can be removed while still retaining the natural flow of speech.
- Dead air can feel like an eternity in a video and can be confusing to your viewers and make them wonder if the video stopped or if it glitched. Trim the dead air.
- Watch out for different audio volume levels if you're merging different clips recorded at different times. Import the clips with the audio set to zero level and then adjust the levels of the different clips to match.
- Always listen to your videos with your computer volume set to a medium level, both with headphones and speakers. If something sounds too quiet or too loud, it likely needs to be adjusted.
- Always fade out and fade in. A new clip appearing out of nowhere can be jarring - especially if the audio doesn't match. A short video and audio fade-out of the previous clip and fade-in on the new clip will make it seem like it's flowing in naturally.

Step #2 - Creating an audio file from a video

Once you've finished editing your video the next step is to turn this into an audio file. Now there are a couple of instances where this step won't apply - if, for example, your video is a screencast video showing people how to code. Or a video teaching macrame then creating an audio file isn't going to make much sense. But for videos where you talk through concepts (whether using a talking head style video or slideshow) an audio file works well.

Most video editing tools will allow you to export an audio-only file so once you're finished editing the video all you'll need to do is hit that export button again and export it as an MP3 audio file.

After exporting, play the audio file all the way through. As you listen to it, take notes of edits you want to make and include the timestamp of where each edit is. Then upload it to your audio editing software to clean it up (if necessary).

Step #3 - Generating a transcript from video/audio

To generate a transcript from either your video/audio file. Decide which transcription service/tool you'll be using (see the section on tech tools and programs) and then generate your transcript.

Once you have your transcript you can use it as on-screen text for each lesson within your course hosting platform as well as use it in Step #4.

Step #4 - Creating downloadable content from your script/transcript

The last piece of content you're going to create is a downloadable PDF. There are many different ways to create downloadable course content, everything from a Word document, to a shared Google doc works. Probably the most common type of downloadable content is a PDF and you can create these in a lot of different ways.

So if you want to make this as simple as possible - all you need to do is save the transcript text document as a PDF.

However, if you'd like to make something a little more visually appealing you could source a template to customise for your downloadable material, (like the workbook template you received with this book).

Canva has an extensive library of templates that you can use and there are plenty of templates for sale on sites like Etsy and Creative Market.

If you're going to create your own downloadable content whether from scratch or using a template, here are a couple of tips when it comes to creating downloads for your course.

- Take your script/transcript and add the text to a template (if you've bought one or are using one from Canva or the one you received with this book)
- Give your downloadable files meaningful names. This will help your readers easily find what they're looking for when they save them on their PCs. A file named Topic1_lesson7-revision5 might make sense to you - but it won't make any sense to them.

- Make them interactive. You can use clickable links to external web pages, videos or documents and this helps reduce the amount of content within your document, but still provide lots of additional resources for further reading.
- You can add fillable fields such as checkboxes or type in fields.
- You can add navigation elements such as bookmarks and ‘tabs’ to skip to different sections in the document based on certain actions.
- Add social media buttons for social sharing with hyperlinks to online discussion areas or live chat to increase the level of interactivity, support and social learning.

And that’s how easy it is to create 4 pieces of different course content that’ll keep your audience engaged.

You can skip some of these steps for example, if your course teaches people how to meditate, you could probably skip the video and go straight to audio (with perhaps just a video of you welcoming people into the course).

#3 Construction phase

In the construction phase, you build your course and get it ready for your audience to consume. Leaving the course platform till last allows you to find the platform that works best for you.

Choosing a platform - or not

“What is the best course platform?” This is a question I get asked *all.the.time*. And the reality is that there is no best course platform. There is only the best course platform for you and your course.

If I were to ask you “What is the best car?” I’m sure your answer would be very different from mine. That’s because there are a lot of different elements that influence the decision to buy a car. Things like whether you need to transport kids in the car. If you like to drive fast. Is safety important to you? Or just how many cup holders it has.

It’s exactly the same when it comes to choosing a course platform. Every course creator is different and every course is different. This means that there isn’t one course platform that suits everyone. The various course platforms offer different elements to suit different requirements.

So how do you figure out which course platform is best for you and your course?

Here are some elements to consider when choosing a course platform:

- How comfortable are you with tech?
- What is your budget?
- Do you already have a website?
- Do you want to host your course on your own website?
- Do you want to offer memberships/subscriptions?
- Do you want to create a community (away from Facebook)?
- Do you want to be able to send emails from the same platform?
- What payment providers do you want to use (ie Paypal, Stripe)?
- Do you want video hosting?
- Do you want predesigned templates to use instead of building from scratch?

Now make a list of all of your requirements and then find the one that checks all of your checkboxes. That's the best platform.

Once you've chosen your platform you can start putting all of the puzzle pieces together and build your course.

Get the visuals right

Once you know where you'll be hosting your course it's time to create the visual elements.

Adding header, module, lesson and video thumbnail images to your course platform is a great way to not only create visual appeal but also to add your branding to your courses. Most course hosting platforms provide guidelines with the image dimensions needed for the images you are able to add. It's best to stick to these dimensions to avoid having pixelated or warped images.

Remember those cover slides we discussed in the presentations slides section? Well, this is where they're going to be useful. They work well as video thumbnail images in most course hosting platforms (or YouTube, Vimeo, Wistia etc).

You can create these in any graphic design tool (ie Canva or Photoshop) and here are some tips for your course visual elements:

- Keep your images consistent across all modules/lessons. This will provide a better visual experience for your audience. If your images vary a lot, it will create a disjointed experience.
- Make sure any photos or graphical images are relevant to the content of the module/lesson
- Make sure the heading/text on your images is legible at all sizes (in some course platforms the modules/lesson lists display very small thumbnail images)
- And follow the guidelines in the section about using images and make sure you respect copyright law

Putting the pieces together

Once you've got your images ready it's time to start building your course.

I'm not going to go through the setup of DIY course hosting options as this is covered very well in the tutorials provided by both of the DIY options I recommended. But for most Platforms this is the procedure.

These are the steps you need to follow:

1. Create the course product. Add in the description of what the course is about and who it's for then upload your course title image.
2. Create the first module and add in the description of what it's about and upload your module image.
3. Create your first lesson within the module and add in the lesson description and upload a lesson image.
4. Add on-screen text for that lesson (this can also be your video transcript if you're going to have one video per lesson).
5. Upload or link to your lesson video.
6. Upload or link to your lesson audio.
7. Upload or link to your lesson PDF download.
8. Add a quiz/assessment
9. Add gamification elements

Then repeat this process for the rest of your lessons and modules until your course setup is complete.

Adding additional engagement elements

Gamifying your course

Some course hosting platforms have gamification features that you can use for your course. However, you don't need any fancy tech to incorporate elements that add interactivity, engagement and immersion to your course. You just need to think about how your audience can get those dopamine and serotonin hits from your course content. To give you some ideas, here are a couple of ways you could add gamification to your course:

- ***Human interaction*** – We all get a hit of dopamine when we interact with other people so how can you add an element of human contact?
- ***Sunshine*** – Get people outdoors. If you're exposed to sunlight, it both increases your number of dopamine receptors and gives you vitamin D, which in turn helps release dopamine.
- ***Meditation*** – Whether it's meditation, journaling or simple self-reflection, these types of activities are linked to increased dopamine levels. Can you introduce visualisation, meditation, journaling tasks or written assignments to your course?
- ***Music*** – Studies have shown that when listening to music, the brain releases dopamine as a response. Is there a way for you to include music?
- ***Creative tasks*** – When you're deep in a creative task, you enter a state of hyper-focus called flow and it's something that dopamine helps you achieve. How can you add creative tasks or activities to your course? Think mind maps, vision boards, creative writing assignments etc.
- ***Checklists*** – Who doesn't like checking things off a to-do list? Dopamine is released after you finish a task, irrespective of

whether it's a big or a small task. So you can gift your audience dopamine hits by creating smaller, more achievable tasks. Then add some checklists for people to check off as they complete these tasks.

- **Exercise** – Get people moving and for a double hit of dopamine, make it a fun creative activity. Or triple it with a fun, creative activity, outdoors.
- **Progress tracking** – Having a visual reminder (like progress trackers, badges or rewards) of the modules and tasks they've completed increases satisfaction and feelings of accomplishment.
- **Social sharing** – If achieving something gives us a dopamine hit, then sharing your success with others is even more powerful. Add a social sharing element to your online courses for learners to share their successes with their friends.
- **Unlock content based on action** – Give your learners the ability to move through your course at their own pace. Allowing them to unlock content when they check off progress items - as and when they're ready. You could even add in some 'easter eggs'. Easter eggs are hidden pieces of bonus content that are only unlocked by completing certain tasks.
- **Quizzes** – With gamified quizzes, you can see how learners are coping with the course content. The idea is to motivate them by showing them how much they've already learned and you can combine your quizzes with social sharing or unlocking content.
- **Tell a story** – We all love a good story. Create a narrative for them to follow as they unlock course modules, complete challenges or quizzes.

So do you see how easy it is to gamify your course? It just takes a bit of thought and a clear understanding of your audience and their needs.

The last thing you need to do is make sure you get paid!

To do this you'll need to set up the payment option for your course.

Depending on the payment provider/s you've chosen to use, this usually involves linking your payment provider account with your course hosting platform. They all have relatively clear step-by-step instructions walking you through the process so you shouldn't find this part too challenging.

Conclusion

Well, we've come to the end of our time together, my friend. And I hope this book has shown you just how doable course creation is.

To recap, we covered the need for online courses to be *redefined*. Which means making sure we're connecting with our audiences and adding interactivity, engagement and immersion to make our courses better. Then we *deconstructed* online courses and had an overview of all of the different types of online courses and the various bits and pieces that they're made of, as well as the tech and programs involved in creating and hosting them. Lastly we moved on to the practical hands-on part of the process covering the 3 parts to *reconstructing* a course: Preparation, Creation and Construction.

The next step for you is really easy. Start!

Make one decision, take one step and then just keep going. Before you know it, your course will be done. Just imagine how great that would be? And once you've done one, you can do more and do them better. It's doable!

Now go and create something amazing.

I'd love to hear more about your course so feel free to join other course creators like you in my [Course Creators Support Group](#) on FaceBook.

And if you decide you don't want to do it all yourself, reach out to me here and let's have a chat:

setupsidekick.com/book-a-quick-call

To your success,

Lisa Oosthuizen