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# A practical guide to developing effective web-based learning

[David A. Cook MD](#)  & [Denise M. Dupras MD, PhD](#)[Journal of General Internal Medicine](#) **19**, 698–707 (2004)**1164** Accesses | **174** Citations | **4** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

## Abstract

**OBJECTIVE:** Online learning has changed medical education, but many “educational” websites do not employ principles of effective learning. This article will assist readers in developing effective educational websites by integrating principles of active learning with the unique features of the Web.

**DESIGN:** Narrative review.

**RESULTS:** The key steps in developing an effective educational website are: Perform a needs analysis and specify goals and objectives; determine

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active learning (self-assessment, reflection, self-directed learning, problem-based learning, learner interaction, and feedback); facilitate and plan to encourage use by the learner (make website accessible and user-friendly, provide time for learning, and motivate learners); evaluate learners and course; pilot the website before full implementation; and plan to monitor online communication and maintain the site by resolving technical problems, periodically verifying hyperlinks, and regularly updating content.

*CONCLUSION:* Teaching on the Web involves more than putting together a colorful webpage. By consistently employing principles of effective learning, educators will unlock the full potential of Web-based medical education.

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