# Analysis and Strategic Path of Self-Directed Learning Ability of "Generation Z" Broadcasting and Hosting Students

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## Abstract

With the continuous development of the media industry, the emergence of intelligent anchors has brought opportunities and challenges to the education of broadcasting and hosting. The main purpose of media education is to cultivate media majors with humanistic feelings, international vision and professional competences under the circumstances where both opportunities and challenges are around us at the same time, it is the most essential goal of education reform in this major to prepare media majors for lifelong learning, help them develop good lifelong learning habits, and assist them to adapt to the development and changes of the industry. This paper intends to research the self-directed learning ability of "Generation Z" broadcasting students in order to improve their learning quality and autonomous learning ability, and provide theoretical reference for teaching of broadcasting and hosting.

## Keywords

Broadcasting and Hosting, Self-Directed Learning, "Generation Z" Broadcasting Students

## 1. Introduction

With the advent of the era of intelligent media, changes have taken place in all walks of life around the world, especially in the media industry. Among them, the emergence of intelligent anchors undoubtedly brings opportunities and challenges to the major of broadcasting and hosting. Under such circumstances, it is the most essential goal of education reform in this major to prepare media majors for lifelong learning, help them develop good lifelong learning habits, and

assist them to adapt to the development and changes of the industry. In order to achieve this goal, the author focuses on how to educate students to become life-long learners, with the stress on "self-directed learning" training.

Self-directed learning (SDL), originated in the United States, is currently applied to many fields of education, and has received good feedback and achieved inspiring research results. In the process of self-directed learning, learners have the initiative to learn, have a clear judgment of learning needs, can formulate learning goals, choose suitable learning resources, make clear the use of learning strategies, and are able to evaluate whether they need help from others according to the learning results (Knowles, 1975). Studies have shown that "Generation Z" has strong generational characteristics with independent values and strong codes of conduct. It is generally believed that "Generation Z" has the strong desire of beautiful appearance, exhibits distinct individuality and enjoys independent personal space. Other than the advantages mentioned above, they also have shortcomings, especially when they are under the influence of the Internet, which is a double-edged sword, "Generation Z" is also known as the "Generation of the Internet". This generation is the reserve force of the future media industry, but with the background that the media landscape is changing rapidly and that the population of "Generation Z" broadcasting majors is rising year by year with uneven qualities and abilities[1]. We need to strengthen their understanding of learning ability and study their learning ability, so as to improve their learning ability, which is very important for the development of broadcasting and hosting industry. The reason why evaluation system of "self-directed learning" ability is used to conduct research is that the "full-cycle" lifelong learning and "multi-dimensional" evaluation indicators advocated by the concept meet the requirements for students' learning ability from the rapid development of the media industry. Therefore, the author mainly uses this evaluation method to evaluate broadcasting students in order to enable them to develop the habit of lifelong learning, adapt to the rapid changes in the industry, and improve learning quality and self-learning ability in the era when media reform rapidly.

## 2. Literature Review

The research on self-directed learning has become one of the hot topics in the field of education in recent years. Through literature review, it is found that the research on self-directed learning ability mainly focuses on the interpretation of meaning, the construction of models, and the analysis of different categories of characteristics.

As for the interpretation of meaning, scholar knowles' early view is to actively learn by diagnosing learning needs, forming learning goals, selecting appropriate learning resources, developing learning strategies, evaluating learning outcomes, and through a series of processes. Scholar (Oddi, 1986) thinks: in the process of learning, people need to pay attention to personal character development characteristics. A relatively accepted view is that, different from relying on teachers

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[1]The exclusive "Generation Z" in the media https://www.sohu.com/a/600396623_121118712.

to achieve teaching objectives according to certain teaching means, self-directed learning means that learners are more willing to take responsibility for their own learning and independent learning.

As for the study of models, (Knowles, 1990) proposed the "self-directed learning model", (Merriam, & Caffarellla, 2011)'s "personal responsibily-oriented" learning model, and Groer's "phased self-directed" learning model.

The research on learner's personality characteristics of self-directed mainly focuses on the two aspects of self-directed learning readiness and self-directed learning. Guglielmino (1977) completed the widely used self-directed learning readiness scale (SDLES). Scholars cheney and candy also discussed the relationship between autonomy and corresponding situational variables.

## 3. Study Design

### 3.1. Object and Method

The Research group in which the author works used "self-rating scale for self-directedness in learning" (SRSSDL) (Chinese version) as a research tool to make a questionnaire, which had 60 standard questions involving 5 dimensions. There were 12 branches under each dimension, including learning awareness, learning strategy, learning behavior, learning evaluation and interpersonal relationship. Likert five-grade scoring method was also used, which granted each question 1 to 5 points, and therefore the score of the whole questionnaire was 60 to 300 points. The score was proportional to the self-directed learning ability of the interviewees. The higher the score and grade, the stronger the self-directed learning ability. The scores of each of the five dimensions and the total score of SRSSDL were calculated. Among the research objects, "Generation Y" refers to people born between 1980 and 1995, also known as "millennials"; "Generation Z" refers to people born between 1995 and 2010. The survey was set for "Generation Y", which refers to and which refers to as for analyzing data, SPSS20.0 was used for data analysis in this study. The measurement data were expressed as "Mean ± Standard Deviation ($x \pm s$)". The comparison between the two groups was performed with t test (Students t test). There was statistical significance when $p$ value < 0.05. T-test is a test method commonly used in statistics to test the difference between the means of two groups, which is called Students t test, while $p$ value is an index to evaluate whether the difference is statistically significant, which is called $p$ value.

The students of the target research team are mainly from the post-1995 generation of broadcasting and hosting arts majors in universities in Chongqing. We randomly extract personal information from these students and send it back for investigation. In the control group, we randomly selected students from non-broadcasting majors, including psychology, foreign language, advertising and other majors to send and receive questionnaires.

### 3.2. Data Sources

The achievement rate of 352 valid questionnaires was 100% (352/352), covering

respondents born from 1980 to 2003, including "Generation Y (born between 1980-1995)" who majored in broadcasting and hosting, "Generation Z (born after 1995)" who are broadcasting and hosting majors, as well as "Generation Z (born after 1995)" who are not broadcasting and hosting majors. In this survey, all of the respondents scored more than 180 points, indicating that the respondents have basic self-directed learning ability.

### 3.3. Measurement Results

First of all, we use SRSSDL to evaluate the learning ability of broadcasting and hosting majors, and the scores are shown in Table 1.

The total score of each dimension is 60 points. The lower the score, the weaker the ability of that dimension. Among the five dimensions, the highest score is in the dimension of learning strategies with an average of 56.98 ± 9.18 points, and the lowest score is 39.27 ± 6.43 in the dimension of learning evaluation. The differences among the five dimensions were statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), and the scores of learning evaluation were significantly lower than those of the other four dimensions.

Compared with the other four dimensions, the lack of learning ability of broadcasting and hosting majors is more worthy of our attention. The research group found that students with different learning abilities have different entrance scores, so the author included entrance scores as variables in this study to prove the correlation between self-directed learning ability and entrance scores of broadcasting and hosting majors. After comparison, it is found that there is a positive correlation between the entrance score and learning ability, that is, the higher the entrance score, the stronger the self-directed learning ability (see Table 2).

In addition to the entrance score, the author also analyzed whether the influence of born year on students' self-directed learning ability. By comparing the "self-directed learning ability" of the two generations, it is found that the difference between "Generation Y" and "Generation Z" broadcasting students lies in the weak communicative ability of "Generation Z" students. Their interpersonal skills decreased significantly (41.31 ± 7.45 after 1995, 43.35 ± 7.77 before 1995), $p = 0.013$. The following are the data from other dimensions: learning awareness

**Table 1.** Scores of broadcasting and hosting majors in five dimensions of self-directed learning ability.

| Dimension | Learning Awareness | Learning strategy | Learning behavior | Learning evaluation | Interpersonal relationship | Total score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 50.46 ± 6.71 | 56.98 ± 9.18 | 42.18 ± 6.99 | 39.27 ± 6.43 | 42.26 ± 7.07 | 274.79 ± 38.95 |
| $p$ | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** |

** $p = 0.000$ ($p$ value indicates the statistical result of the comparison between the dimension and other dimensions, $p < 0.05$ *, $p < 0.01$ **, and ** indicates that the statistical difference is more significant).

Table 2. Comparison of entrance scores and self-directed learning ability.

| Dimension | Learning Awareness | Learning strategies | Learning behavior | Learning evaluation | Interpersonal relationships | Total score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Excellent entrance scores | 52.86 ± 6.72 | 59.73 ± 9.42 | 44.31 ± 7.47 | 41.03 ± 6.76 | 44.36 ± 7.68 | 287.95 ± 41.39 |
| Good entrance scores | 49.02 ± 5.26 | 55.82 ± 8.70 | 41.06 ± 6.52 | 38.37 ± 6.17 | 41.07 ± 6.44 | 267.80 ± 35.72 |
| Poor entrance scores | 47.74 ± 5.26 | 51.03 ± 6.40 | 38.85 ± 4.18 | 36.44 ± 4.00 | 39.44 ± 4.92 | 254.66 ± 24.62 |
| $p$ | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** | 0.000** |

**: $p < 0.01$ ($p$ value indicates the statistical result of learning ability scores corresponding to different entrance scores, $p < 0.05$ *, $p < 0.01$ ** in statistics, and ** indicates that the statistical difference is more significant).

(Generation Z 50.62 ± 6.43, Generation Y 50.27 ± 7.03) $p = 0.654$, learning strategy (Generation Z 56.65 ± 8.88, Generation Y 57.35 ± 9.53) $p = 0.516$, learning behavior (Generation Z 42.41 ± 6.583, Generation Y 41.92 ± 7.45) $p = 0.543$, learning evaluation (Generation Z 39.68 ± 6.02, Generation Y 38.81 ± 6.87) $p = 0.243$, total score (Generation Z 274.55 ± 35.98, Generation Y 275.06 ± 42.24) $p = 0.911$. There was no significant difference in other abilities. Table 3 shows the comparative changes between the broadcasting students of Generation Y and Generation Z regarding the five dimensions.

However, it has not been reported whether there are differences in the scores of the five dimensions between broadcasting and hosting majors and students in other majors. This study further compares the scores of "self-directed learning ability" of broadcasting and hosting majors and those of students in other majors of "Generation Z", and the result shows that there is no statistical difference in self-directed learning ability between students in broadcasting and students in other majors (see Table 4).

## 4. Specific Discussion

1) In the survey of self-directed learning ability, there is no significant difference in self-directed learning ability between students majoring in broadcasting and students in other majors, which is different from people's view of students majoring in broadcasting and hosting. In the traditional concept, students majoring in broadcasting and hosting are taken as having low cultural achievements and poor abilities in all aspects, but the data show that this is not the case. This conclusion can also break this stereotype to some extent and promote subject enrollment.

One possible explanation for the distribution of the scores regarding the five dimensions is that they are influenced by the particularity of the major of broadcasting and hosting. Students majoring in broadcasting and hosting art are often

**Table 3.** Comparison between broadcasting and hosting majors of Generation Y and Generation Z regarding five dimensions.

| Dimension | Learning Awareness | Learning strategies | Learning behavior | Learning evaluation | Interpersonal relationships | Total score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Generation Z | 50.62 ± 6.43 | 56.65 ± 8.88 | 42.41 ± 6.58 | 39.68 ± 6.02 | 41.31 ± 6.27 | 274.55 ± 35.98 |
| Generation Y | 50.27 ± 7.03 | 57.35 ± 9.53 | 41.92 ± 7.45 | 38.81 ± 6.87 | 43.35 ± 7.77 | 275.06 ± 42.24 |
| $p$ | 0.654 | 0.516 | 0.542 | 0.243 | 0.013* | 0.911 |

*: $p < 0.05$ ($p$ value indicates the statistical comparison of learning ability of different generations. In statistics, $p < 0.05$ *, $p < 0.01$ **, and ** indicates that the statistical difference is more significant).

**Table 4.** Comparison of self-directed learning ability between "Generation Z" broadcasting students and non-broadcasting students.

| Dimension | Learning Awareness | Learning strategies | Learning behavior | Learning evaluation | Interpersonal relationships | Total score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Generation Z" broadcasting students | 50.62 ± 6.43 | 56.65 ± 8.88 | 42.41 ± 6.58 | 39.68 ± 6.02 | 41.31 ± 6.27 | 274.55 ± 35.98 |
| "Generation Z" non-broadcasting students | 49.88 ± 6.33 | 54.94 ± 7.37 | 40.94 ± 5.99 | 38.47 ± 5.31 | 42.01 ± 5.76 | 269.27 ± 32.47 |
| $p$ | 0.47 | 0.213 | 0.156 | 0.200 | 0.478 | 0.351 |

(The $p$-value indicates the statistical comparison of the learning ability of "Generation Z" broadcasting students and non-broadcasting students, $p > 0.05$, which is not statistically significant).

outgoing and active in thinking. When completing specific learning tasks, they can better choose, use and control learning procedures, rules, methods, skills, resources and so on. Generation Z broadcasting students also have such characteristics. In the study of professional courses of broadcasting and hosting, teachers will set up matching strategy models for students to refer to. The survey also showed that learning evaluation scored the lowest. Broadcasting and hosting art majors have certain subjective aesthetic orientation, so other people's evaluation of their works inevitably varies from person to person; students do not know how to better understand and implement feedback in the learning stage. They also lack critical thinking in the feedback to learning evaluation.

2) The self-directed learning ability of students majoring broadcasting and hosting is positively correlated with their entrance scores. This shows that self-directed learning ability is closely related to students' comprehensive perfor-

mance and learning ability. Under the threat of artificial intelligence anchors, we have realized that only when broadcasting students pay attention to the output of high-quality content and enhance their comprehensive cultural literacy, can they dominate the future industry competition. Therefore, in the process of student recruitment, improving requirement for scores of cultural examinations is the trend of enrollment of students majoring in broadcasting and hosting in colleges and universities in recent years. Increasing the proportion of cultural courses and raising the threshold of enrollment are not only the policy-oriented requirements of the state, but also in line with the matching of self-oriented learning ability.

Compared with the "Generation Y" broadcasting students, the "Generation Z" broadcasting students' interpersonal skills have declined, which is due to the major changes in the way of interpersonal communication in the network digital age. The biggest characteristic of the broadcasting students of Generation Y is that with the deepening of reform and opening up process, they have experienced the rapid popularization of PC computers and the Internet, thus having formed a completely different attitude towards life and values from the previous generation. Broadcasting and hosting art students in this period are in the golden age of the development of traditional media, so they have the quality of traditional media.

3) Generation Z broadcasting students are the aborigines of digital era. The Internet and digital products have been embedded in their daily lives and become part of their lives. Driven by the technological revolution, the lifestyle of Generation Z has undergone a qualitative change. They are more self-centered and independent and they pay more attention to the experience of life. At the same time, they also know how to tap the best value and service. Generation Z in our country is generally the only child, which is more concerned by the family elders, and their childhood loneliness makes them more eager to rely on the network channels to seek recognition. Under such a growth background, Generation Z people are more inclined to connect with the outside world through weak relationships compared with Generation Y people who rely on strengthening relationships and interpersonal communication to relieve their inner feelings. As scholar Zhang Jie pointed out in his article Communication through Strangeness: "New changes have occurred in the way of interpersonal communication in the Internet age, and strangers approve more their identity on the Internet" (Zhang, 2012; Zhang, 2016). They are seamlessly connected with the network information age as soon as they are born, and are greatly influenced by digital information technology, instant messaging equipment, smart phone products and so on. On the other hand, although Generation Z is self-centered and they have a weak sense of cooperation with others, most of them are ambitious, experience-oriented, unique and distinct, pride, and willing to pursue and try all kinds of new things, and are also the leading force of China's new economy, new consumption and new culture in the future.

## 5. Strategy and Extension Recommendations

The investigation results of self-directed learning ability of students majoring in broadcasting and hosting art show that the score of learning strategy is the highest and the score of learning evaluation is the lowest. There is no significant difference in self-directed learning ability between broadcasting and non-broadcasting students of generation Z. There is a positive correlation between the entrance score and self-directed learning ability of broadcasting students. The difference between the two generations of Generation Y and Generation Z is that Generation Z has weaker communicating ability.

It is worth noting that the major of broadcasting and hosting art has obvious professional characteristics of "interpersonal communication", and hosting itself has also a fundamental feature of interpersonal communication, but the communicative competence of Generation Z broadcasting students is weakening, which is a warn. In the new era of mobile interconnection, to promote the teaching and education of art of broadcasting and hosting, we need to consider how to strengthen the ability of broadcasting students to integrate into society and communicate with people, how to cultivate the habit of lifelong learning of broadcasting students, how to create a learner-centered teaching environment, how to design division of labor and cooperation, internal discussion and design modification in the team for students, how to express oneself and accept others in the collision and debate of ideas, how to emphasize the coordination of students to shape team spirit, how to break through and hold on tighter facing the complex and changeable media industry environment, how to improve the ability of learning evaluation, establish the "growth-oriented" way of thinking, and keep fresh and curious about learning and growth, how to find out the "core competitiveness" in the fierce changes of the media pattern, enrich the humanistic connotation and strengthen the practical operation, and so on.

### 5.1. Carry out "Cooperative" Learning

"Cooperative" learning originated in the United States in the 1970s. This teaching mode mainly emphasizes group learning as well as student-centered teaching and learning. It attaches importance to students' sense of cooperation, individual responsibility and creativity of self-practice. Targeting the weakening of the communicative competence of Generation Z broadcasting students, we can strengthen the "cooperative" teaching method, cultivate students' cooperative learning ability, so that students can learn to cooperate with one another, adhere to the culture of cooperation, respect and trust one another, communicate and coordinate in practice, complete division of labor and cooperation with good communication skills, and in the end shape the spirit of cooperation.

By establishing learning communities and completing tasks from the courses by groups, students will complete topic selection, planning, recording, production, publicity, and broadcasting in the cooperation among the group members. In this way, students' learning will be carried out in the mode of cooperation and

competition within the team. They will be able to establish a long-term and effective learning community and apply enthusiasm of active learning and learn how to learn, how to study, and how to cooperate with others. In the end, students will find the pleasure of learning and practice.

## 5.2. Carry out "Project Task-Driven" Learning

When self-directed learning ability gets strengthened, students will complete the project objectives in a "task-driven" way. Such a learner-centered learning approach has an inherent incentive effect, and it can realize self-values. At the same time, the drive of curiosity is also the source of motivation for learning. Project-driven learning is still a student-centered teaching practice, which fully mobilizes students' learning initiative and enthusiasm, and adjusts students' responsibilities and roles in the learning process (Doyle, 2014). It can also cultivate students' autonomous learning ability, team spirit and innovative consciousness.

In the process of learning, project management and live-like broadcasting are added to the learning. Based on the learning section of the course, the content of the course unit is decomposed into various classified projects, and the internal driving force of students is stimulated by assessments of project task. It is emphasized that students should attach significance to the ability of multi-directional thinking and coordination, mobilizes learning enthusiasm, and optimizes learning effect.

## 5.3. Use Network Resources to Improve Humanistic Literacy

The inner spiritual quality of people-centered humanity and the extent of humanistic literacy are directly related to students' development. During the growth of Generation Z, they receive fragmented information, lack of in-depth reading, and then neglect the training of humanistic literacy. However, there are also many curriculum resources on the Internet, which can also help them improve their humanistic quality or comprehensive quality. Therefore, taking advantages of the resources on the Internet to enhance their humanistic literacy is also in line with the learning style of Generation Z.

There is a positive correlation between entrance scores and self-directed learning ability, which proves once again that humanistic literacy is the core of learning. In the era of intelligent media, the loss of professional boundaries in broadcasting is obvious. The addition of artificial intelligence virtual anchors has brought great challenges to the industry. On the other hand, it shows that our professional skills have depreciated. Humanistic literacy is the core literacy. It helps to maintain the legitimacy and irreplaceability of the profession and is also the core competitiveness of the profession. In the era of mobile interconnection, we should adhere to long-term and extensive reading and learning, and absorb the advantages of massive information, convenience and openness of network resources. At the same time, the professional expression of broadcasting also advocates paying attention to "preparation in a broad sense", which is, in other words, the

long-term accumulation of knowledge. The habit of lifelong learning also meets the requirements of self-directed learning ability.

We should actively use high-quality online education and teaching platforms such as "China University MOOCs" and "Wisdom Tree" and get access to lecture videos, high-quality display videos, and special lectures, so that we can break through the boundaries between universities and majors and use high-quality online resources to gather subject wisdom and arm students' minds. Thus students will be able to access shared resources and improve learning autonomy and collaboration. We can also regularly hold "reading clubs" to incorporate reading and sharing into the formal part of the classroom, so that reading can become a way of life.

## 5.4. Consolidate Teachers' Awareness of Lifelong Learning

"The big fish leads and the small fish follows. This is what we call swimming along." This is the teaching philosophy of the famous scholar Mei Yiqi's. The essence of education is also the process of one soul arousing another soul and one piece of cloud pushing another. The teacher-student relationship of the major of broadcasting and hosting is workshop-style, in which teachers are like masters and students are like apprentices. As an important end of information, teachers' style and habits will greatly affect students' learning status and bring profound influence to students. In the process of teaching, teachers' ability of inspiring students and setting models for them is particularly important. Teachers themselves should consolidate their awareness of lifelong learning, constantly update their knowledge reserves, renew their knowledge structure, and maintain their learning mentality (Feng, 2018), as well as establish their "growth-oriented" thinking pattern, so as to promote the ability and habit of lifelong learning of broadcasting students.

Relevant affiliations should provide guidance and training for teachers' growth, increase the improvement of teachers' teaching and professional ability, and continuously improve teachers' self-learning ability in a high-quality learning environment and atmosphere. Teachers can also use the high-quality learning resources from the Internet, cooperate across majors and schools, and form a learning cooperation community. At the same time, teachers need to strengthen the ability of making summary, making evaluation and thinking critically. Teachers should also consider regularly about whether the progress is completed, what aspects need to be improved, what problems still exist and how they can be solved, so that teachers can constantly enrich professional knowledge and skills and achieve self-development.

## Foundation Project

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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