

## Online Materials for Self Directed Learning

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### Abstrak

Sejak dunia dilanda pandemi Covid-19, media daring semakin banyak digunakan dan dianggap praktis baik oleh siswa maupun guru. Paradigma pendidikan yang awalnya berpusat pada guru, perlahan bergeser menjadi berpusat pada siswa, memberikan kebebasan kepada siswa untuk menentukan apa dan bagaimana mereka belajar. Oleh karena itu, siswa perlu dipersiapkan agar memiliki kemandirian dalam belajar. Ketersediaan akses media daring sangat mendukung proses mencapai kemandirian belajar, namun dalam praktiknya, apakah media daring telah digunakan secara optimal, terutama oleh pembelajar bahasa Jepang, masih menjadi pertanyaan. Pembelajar bahasa harus meningkatkan kemandirian mereka dalam belajar dan tidak bergantung sepenuhnya pada guru. Masalahnya adalah kesenjangan antara tuntutan kemandirian belajar dan kemampuan siswa untuk mandiri belajar. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini akan mengidentifikasi bagaimana siswa mempraktikkan pembelajaran mandiri dengan memanfaatkan media daring. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana siswa menggunakan media online untuk menjadi pembelajar mandiri. Penelitian kualitatif ini mengumpulkan data dengan menyebarkan kuesioner kepada tiga kelas program studi bahasa Jepang di sebuah universitas dan juga kepada dosen, pada bulan Juni 2024. Hasilnya, tidak semua dosen mengembangkan keterampilan metakognitif siswa dalam belajar, bagaimana belajar dan menjadi pembelajar mandiri. Siswa mengharapkan instruksi dari dosen tentang cara menggunakan media daring secara efektif untuk menjadi pemelajar mandiri. Hasil penelitian ini akan digunakan sebagai rekomendasi bagi siswa dan dosen, untuk mengembangkan kemampuan pembelajaran mandiri siswa dengan memanfaatkan media daring sebagai salah satu strategi pembelajaran.

**Kata kunci:** kemandirian belajar, keterampilan metakognitif, media daring pembelajaran bahasa asing.

### Abstract

*Foreign language learning materials are increasingly easy to access through online media. Moreover, since the world was hit by the Covid 19 pandemic, online media has become increasingly widely used, and is considered practical by both students and teachers. The educational paradigm was originally teachers-centered, now has shifted to student-centered, which gives freedom to students to determine what and how they learn. Therefore, students need to be equipped to carry out independent learning or self-directed learning. The availability of online media access really supports the independent learning process, but in practice, whether online media is used optimally, especially by Japanese language learners is still a question. Language learner must increase their independency in learning and do not depend entirely on the teachers. The problem the gap between independent learning demands and students' independent learning abilities. Therefore, this research will identify how students practice independent learning by utilizing online media. This research aims to*

*explain how students use online media, to become an independent learner. This qualitative research collects data by distributing questionnaires to three classes of Japanese study program students at a university and to lecturer as well, in June 2024. As a result, not all lecturer cultivate student' metacognitive skill in learning how to learn and become an independent learner. Student demand teachers' instruction on how to effectively use online media to become a self-directed learner. The results of this research will be used as recommendation for both students and lecturers, in order to develop student's independent learning abilities by utilizing online media, as a learning strategy.*

**Keywords:** *foreign language learning, metakognitif skill, online media, self-directed learning*

## 1. Introduction

University students are considered an adult learner. As adults pursuing higher education at the university level, students are expected to have chosen a field of study that aligns with their interests, and to understand the responsibilities that come with being a student as well. One of these responsibilities is to study. Therefore, students are highly encouraged to develop self-directed learning skills to succeed academically and eventually graduate.

Adult learning theories differ from theories of childhood learning which can be more standardized. For example, it is typical for toddlers to begin walking between 9-12 months and to start making sounds with their lips and tongue around 6-7 months. However, adults do not have specific ages tied to specific learning achievements. Instead, each adult's learning outcomes vary based on their needs, past experiences, responsibilities, and personal factors. Essentially, adults are best equipped to understand their needs, experiences, and responsibilities in deciding what and whether to learn or not learn. Thus, learning for adults demands self-awareness and motivation, therefore self-directed learning becoming necessary not only academically but also in daily life.

This self-directed learning was notably evident during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when students faced the sudden challenge of learning independently. In addition to the reduced social interaction with classmates, seniors, and teachers, students needed strong technology literacy to keep up with their courses. Language classes, previously geared towards communicative approaches and student-centered learning, faced challenges when teachers and students could not be in the same physical location. In conversation classes, teachers used breakout rooms on Zoom, but monitoring each group's participation was challenging due to time lags. Likewise, in kanji classes, it was difficult for teachers to observe stroke-writing exercises, dictations, and kanji quizzes because they couldn't directly monitor each student. While some students remained motivated, others found it challenging to meet these demands, requiring them to find ways to adapt and at the same time, achieve good grades.

This study aims to identify how students apply self-directed learning using online media. It is expected to provide a self-directed learning model that will help students who lack independence in their studies.

What are the characteristics of students with self-directed learning? This concept is closely related to readiness and personality. Highly self-directed students tend to have a strong curiosity, take initiative independently, demonstrate a strong desire to learn, persist in reaching their goals, have high self-confidence, take responsibility for their learning, and view challenges as opportunities (Morris, T. H., Bremner, N., & Sakata, N., 2023). According to Sanjayanti, Sulistiono, and Budiretnani (2015) in Maksum, A and Lestari, Ika (2020), indicators of self-directed learning include 1) Confidence, 2) Discipline, 3) Initiative, and 4)

Responsibility. Achieving self-directed learning involves three elements: a) the learner, b) the teachers, and c) learning resources (Knowles, 1975). Self-directed learning must be pursued, practiced, and treated as a lifelong tool.

At the university level, teachers no longer play the full role of teachers or educator as school teachers do but serve more as facilitators, as they are not the sole source of knowledge. Thus, students must seek out other resources to answer questions related to their content. They look for resources that match their learning style and needs. In the digital and information technology era, learning resources are readily available and customizable according to the user's needs, interests, and preferences by accessing online media.

Before discussing self-directed learning further, it is important to clarify several overlapping terms. De Beaufort (2016) and Livingston (2012) state that independent learning and self-directed learning are synonymous. According to the *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning* (pp. 1526-1529), independent learning is defined as a learning process where students control their learning by directing, organizing, and assessing it themselves.

Knowles, as cited in Tracy Harrington-Atkinson (2016), emphasizes that self-directed learning is a process in which individuals take the initiative without external help. To achieve self-directed learning, students need to determine 1) their learning needs or readiness, 2) learning goals, 3) learning resources, 4) apply appropriate strategies, and finally, 5) evaluate their learning outcomes.

The term SDL (self-directed learning) is often compared with SRL (self-regulated learning), or autonomous learning. Pilling-Cormick & Garrison (2007), as well as Saks and Leijen (2014), explain that SDL includes internal and external learning processes, where learners plan, implement, and evaluate their learning outcomes. Meanwhile, SRL, also known as self-regulated learning, focuses more on self-initiative, persistence, and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, to apply SDL, learners must possess SRL skills. One tool to help students achieve self-directed learning is a module created by the learner under the guidance of a professor. A good module should have certain characteristics: (1) Self-instruction, (2) Self-contained, (3) Stand-alone, (4) Adaptive, and (5) User-friendly (Fatikhah & Izzati, 2015). This module is used to support self-study outside classroom hours.

To optimize module development for self-directed learning, learners need metacognitive awareness of learning itself, which includes declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge cognition. It also involves regulatory cognition, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Rinaldi, 2017). This metacognitive strategy will help learners develop awareness of their thought processes while learning.

Louisa and Sell (2024) studied the use of online video media as a tool for self-directed learning in second-language (foreign language) acquisition, with extensive viewing as the key. When students freely access online media using the target language, they receive positive exposure to it. The issue is how much students realize that life itself is a learning opportunity, allowing them to see everything they access as potential learning material. The term "learning" may have developed a negative connotation, making it essential to introduce a concept of learning that encourages students to adopt a neutral or positive perspective, making learning part of their lifestyle. After all, learning doesn't have to be difficult or boring.

## 2. Method

This research was conducted using a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire completed by 63 students from the 2023 cohort out of a total of 70 students. The questionnaire results provided information about the online learning resources that students commonly used, the duration of their online media usage, and their reasons for using these media. After mapping the data on learning resources, further

information was gathered from respondents through semi-structured interviews in focus group discussions. These discussions provided more detailed insights into the students' challenges, expectations, and plans to develop self-directed learning skills. The findings from this research will be applied to guide the 2024 cohort of new students to become self-directed learners.

### 3. Data Collection and Findings

The presentation of results includes respondent demographics, an overview of the survey, types of online media, the purpose and duration of online media usage, methods of use, and instructor involvement in online media usage.

#### 3.1 Respondent

The survey was completed by 63 students out of 70 from the 2023 cohort, consisting of 33 men and 30 women aged 17-21, with an average age of 18. Among the respondents, five students plan to retake courses in the upcoming fall semester.

The following is a tabulation of survey results, including details on online media usage, types of online media, access duration, reasons for using online media, methods of use, and students' expectations for instructor guidance on online media use.

Tabel 1. Questionnaire Responses (responses)

Q1	Do you use online material to study Japanese?	-Yes (60) -No (3)
Q2	What are the reason you do not use online material?	-Do not use (1) -Prefer to learn and understand face-to face than online (1) -More convenient using printed materials/book (1)
Q3	Will you access the online learning resource when notified the link?	-Yes (59 orang) -No (1 orang) -Not sure 1 (orang)
Q4	Please write online resource used to learn grammar.	(see table 2)
Q5	How did you know these links?	- Teacher (1) - Senior (1) - Friend (16) - Self discover (43) - Do not access (2)
Q6	How much time do you consume weekly to access online learning materials?	-15-30 minutes (22) -30-60 minutes (26) - More than 60 minutes (13) - Do not access (2)
Q7	Are there any obstacle or difficulties in using online learning materials?	-Yes (14 orang) -No (47 orang) - Do not access (2)
Q8	What are your reasons using online learning material? Write the numbers suitable to your answer.	1. can be accessed any time and any where 2. easy to understand 3. easy to find learning material 4. lot of example and exercise 5. enjoyable
Q9	When do you mostly access online learning materials?	-Before class (19) -After class (15) -Before and after class (26) -Do not access (3)
Q10	How do you memorize learned subject you gain through online	- Take notes (6) - Make summary (13)

	learning?	- Watch over and over (1) - Do not access (3)
Q11	Do you agree that using online learning materials helps my learning process?	-Yes (46) -Do not access (2) -Less helpful (5) -Very helpful (10)
Q12	Online learning materials is most usefull in learning .....	-Kanji (18) -Grammar (21) -Reading (8) -Writing (2) -Listening (11) -Speaking (1) - Do not access (2)
Q13	Explanation given in the online learning materials are easier to understand than my teachers explanation.	-Yes, agree (6) - Do not agree (54) -Do not access (3)
Q14	Teachers are expected to explain how to make use of online learning materials.	-Yes, agree (42) -Do not agree (19) - Do not access (2)

### 3.2 Online learning materials

From the answers to questionnaire Q4, the names of websites or applications accessed by students as online learning media are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Online learning media accessed by students (number of students)

Application / Web sites			
1. <b>YouTUBE (25)</b> (Chakurin fufu, Nippon time, Megane sensei, Yasashii nihongo)	6. Obenkyo (3)	15. <b>Mazii (11)</b>	24. Kanjistudy (2)
Instagram (@haikei_id); (@ryu_means_dragon	7. <b>Duolingo (7)</b>	16. Imiwa (1)	25. Kanjiflashcard (1)
2. Todaiieasyjapanese (3)	8. <b>Shirabejisho (7)</b>	17. <b>Imina (10)</b>	26. Jreads (1)
3. Dictionarytakoboto (1)	9. JLPT sensei (4)	18. Migii (1)	27. Satori reader (2)
4. Kepojepang (1)	10. Hinative (1)	19. Irodori (1)	28. renhuu (2)
5. Learnjapaesedaily (1)	11. <b>Wkwkjapan (10)</b>	20. busuu (1)	29. Japanesebunpo (1)
	12. Nihongonomori.com (2)	21. <b>Tiktok (7)</b>	30. Tofugu.com (1)
	13. <b>Tanoshijapanese (5)</b>	22. Oboeru (1)	31. shirabete kanji (1)
	14. Nippontime (1)	23. Anki (1)	32. Nihongomaster (1)
			33. Yasashii nihongo (3)

### 3.3 Utilization of online media, information source and access duration

Out of 63 respondents, 3 person stated that they did not access online media during independent learning process. 1 person did not provide a reason, 1 person stated that they were more comfortable learning using printed media, and 1 person stated that they were more comfortable listening to material explanations directly from a person such as teacher or friend. From these results, it can be seen that the majority of students access online media as a supplementary resource in studying independently. For the question of the source of information for online learning materials, 43 people stated that they found it themselves, while 16 person received information from peers, the others received information from seniors, lecturers or did not use online media.

We can see on the following chart, the responses on the question Q5 How did you know these links? and Q6 How much time do you consume weekly to access online learning materials?

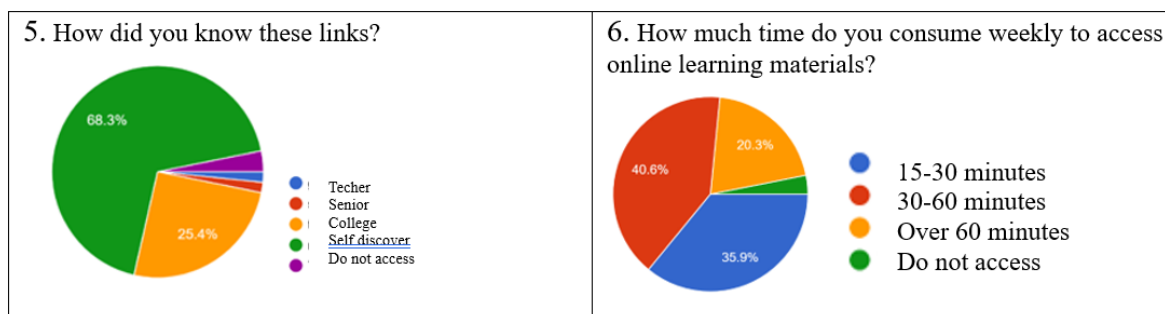


Figure 1. Information source and access duration

Question Q6. is about the time used to access online teaching materials for 1 week. The percentage of the sequence of duration of access to online teaching materials is 25 people (30-60 minutes), 22 people (15-30 minutes) and 13 people (more than 60 minutes). If it is assumed that students study for 5 days, then online media access is done for 6-12 minutes in one day, and only 13 people access more than 12 minutes each day.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Reason of using online media

First, regarding question Q8. Reasons for using online media. Respondents were asked to sort according to the reasons for using online media as a learning medium. Respondents answered as follows:

Table 3. Reason of using online media

Answer option	Mostly chosen reason	Secondly most chosen
1. can be accessed any time and any where	52	3
2. easy to understand	2	30
3. easy to find learning material	3	21
4. lot of example and exercise	2	2
5. enjoyable	2	2

From the analysis of respondents' answers, it was found that practicality or ease of access is the primary reason for choosing online learning media, with 53 respondents indicating this preference. This suggests that the majority prioritize easy access when selecting a learning platform. The next most cited reason was “easy-to-understand material,” chosen by 30 respondents, making it the second most popular reason.

Learners’ preference for online media over printed resources, like books, is understandable. In addition to enabling access without time or location constraints, online platforms offer practical features like “search” functions, allowing users to quickly find needed topics. If a topic is not available, users can immediately switch to another site and continue searching. This highlights the role of online media in providing both time-saving advantages and the flexibility and efficiency that learners seek.

### 4.2 The most chosen application

This section presents several choices of applications accessed by students, and a study contract plan to achieve learning independence. From the questionnaire answers, 33 online media were recorded as being accessed by students. The following will explain the advantages of the top five online media accessed by respondents. In conducting independent

learning, the top 5 online media accessed by respondents are Youtube (25), Mazii (11), Imina (10), wkwk-japan (10), duolingo (7), tiktok (7), shirabejisho (6) and The following will explain what can be obtained through access to the four sites and applications. Number in brackets shows number of students accessing the application.

### 1) You Tube (25)

Students specifically mentioned 4 YouTube links that were accessed. Of the 4 YouTube accounts accessed by students, 3 of them were shows that contained grammar explanations that referred to teaching materials that were also used in class lectures. 2 of the 3 accounts used the language of instruction, Indonesian, and 1 account explained Japanese grammar using Japanese as the language of instruction. The advantages that can be obtained by accessing YouTube are

- a) Yasashii nihongo (explanation in Bahasa Indonesia).  
This account consists of recordings that explain Japanese grammar by referring to a Japanese language textbook. The textbook is the same as the textbook used in lectures. There are several recordings made for kanji learning that explain basic knowledge about kanji. In addition to these two materials, this account also provides recordings containing explanations about the seasons and Japanese culture. The duration for grammar explanations ranges from 10-20 minutes, while for kanji and Japanese culture ranges from 3-5 minutes. Accessed by 3 person.
- b) Nippon time (explanation in Bahasa Indonesia), is an account that contains Japanese grammar learning materials and practice questions that also refer to the teaching materials used in class lectures. Accessed by 1 person.
- c) Megane sensei (explanation in Japanese), is an account that contains explanations of Japanese grammar materials by a Japanese person and practice questions that also refer to teaching materials used in class lectures. Accessed by 3 people.
- d) Chakurin fufu (explanation in Bahasa Indonesia), is a content created by a husband (Indonesian) and wife (Japan), who designed this channel for viewers who want to master Japanese by focusing on the listening skill. Various topics were raised and discussed using Japanese mixed with Indonesian language. The couple's content is also available on Instagram and Tiktok. Accessed by 1 person.
- e) 25 students mentioned accessing YouTube but did not specify what channel they watched.

### 2. Mazii (11)

This website is an application that provides dictionary features, translators and learning material features such as JLPT, news texts with furigana, community features that open up opportunities to communicate with fellow Japanese language learners. Like other websites, this site is free to access, but will get additional features if you subscribe. This site does not provide cultural explanations, but there is a question and answer forum for topics such as learning Japanese, studying in Japan, working in Japan, Japanese culture, travel, engineering, health and others.

### **3a. Imina (10)**

Imina is an application that can be accessed via mobile phones. This application offers learning that refers to basic textbooks used in various Japanese language education institutions in Indonesia, namely Minna no Nihongo. There are various buttons to access vocabulary, grammar, kanji, conversation, reading, listening to practice and quizzes. Learning with JLPT N5-N1 targets is also available. Although there is no culture page, there is a relax video button that provides videos on how to make lamps that can be used when the lights go out during a natural disaster, song videos, poems, examples of conversations in the office or when ordering at a restaurant.

### **3b. wkwkjapan (10)**

WKWKJAPAN is an abbreviation for *Warung Karir & Workshop Kejepangan*, an agency that is active in the field of Japanese Language Education and Japanese-style careers (<https://wkwkjapan.com/about/>). In addition to having a website, this account can be accessed via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. Wkwkjapan provides online courses with Japanese native speakers, free of charge, with the target of passing JLPT N4 in 1 year. In addition, there are hiragana and katakana exercises, JLPT quizzes, Japanese language materials for high school, and Japanese in the workplace.

### **4a. Duolingo (7)**

Duolingo is an application that can be accessed at Playstore on a mobile phone or downloaded using a computer. This application can be accessed to learn various foreign languages, including Japanese. Duolingo is a structured foreign language learning application, so users cannot jump to another level arbitrarily. Before starting, we are asked to agree on the target and learning objectives and duration of learning, so that by adhering to it, the learning objectives that have been set at the beginning will be achieved.

### **4b) Tiktok (7)**

Tiktok is an application that is usually accessed via mobile phones, although 7 respondents mentioned accessing content that supports Japanese language learning, it was not specifically stated what content they followed.

### **4c) Shirabejisho (7)**

Shirabe jisho or [jisho.org](http://jisho.org) is used as a dictionary that can search by voice, radicals and also handwriting. It is explained that shirabe Jisho is a Japanese-English dictionary for iOS. Shirabe jisho can be accessed via computer, which shows that shirabe jisho is the same as [jisho.org](http://jisho.org). Although basically a dictionary, this dictionary provides word translations along with example sentences. Because it is dictionary-based, this media does not provide grammar exercises or 4 language skills.

### **5) Tanoshijapanese (5)**

Tanoshijapanese is a Japanese language learning website that provides animations, games, videos, books, dictionaries, crosswords and more. This site is free, but you have to register before you can use it. To register, you need to upload a photo of yourself, personal information such as full name, place and date of birth, location, length of time studying Japanese, and more. Although you have to register first, five people accessed and learned to use this site, showing that this site is quite complete and interesting.

### 4.3 Self-directed learning plan

As cited from Morris, T. H., Bremner, N., & Sakata, N., 2023, students who have learning independence, have a high curiosity, take initiative, have a high desire to learn, persistence in achieving targets, high self-confidence, are responsible for learning, and face problems as learning challenges. A learner with learning independence will carry out learning stages without direction from the teacher, and is able to make a learning contract with himself. Japanese language learning independence is expected to be possessed by students through the introduction of various learning media and how to use them. However, becoming an independent learner can be instilled in students, namely as exemplified by This process is planned to be mastered by students in the first year, namely in semesters 1 and 2. To equip learners with learning independence in the first face-to-face, orientation will be filled with an introduction to the learning process, Lecture Program Units, and an introduction to various online learning sites. Students are asked to make a learning contract consisting of 2 weeks of learning, followed by periodic tests. Students will fill out a self-evaluation by commenting on the advantages and disadvantages of the learning media used, and evaluating their own learning outcomes.

In the self-directed learning contract, students are first given an example of how to identify the components that form learning independence, namely confirming 1) learning needs and readiness, 2) learning objectives, 3) learning resources, application of learning strategies that are appropriate for themselves, and 4) self-evaluation. Then students understand how to fill in the columns in the learning contract table. The learning contract is shown in Table 5, which accommodates the four components that form learning independence. This table is introduced during orientation, and students access it via the dirve, so that teachers can observe how students learn. Students write down the time, learning media used and self-evaluation. In this way, it is hoped that learners can immediately find out which parts are not yet understood by students, and students themselves can immediately find a learning method that is appropriate for themselves.

In order to monitor student learning, evaluations for grammar are conducted in week 2 (chapter 1-4 test), week 4 (chapter 1-7 test), week 6 (chapter 1-10 test) and week 8 (mid-term exam chapter 1-13). While for reading, listening and kanji materials are conducted in weeks 4 and 8. With several tests, students have the opportunity to evaluate whether the learning method and learning media chosen are appropriate, or whether they need to change the learning method. The following is an example of a learning contract sheet that will be implemented.

Table 4. Learning agreement

Date	Learning Objectives	Planning Time & learning subject (1) morning; (2) afternoon (3) night	Self evaluation / test score result	Notes
(date) day	Memorize Kana	(2) review Kana reading from moduls (3) Practice Kana writing from youtube tutorial and moduls	Hiragana 80/100 Katakana 60/100	Aim to get 100/100
(date) Day	Hiragana, Katakana test	(3) Practice dictation	Hiragana 100/100 Katakana 80/100	Speed up writing
(date) Day	<b>Minna no Nihongo Leson 1: <i>Jikoshoukai</i></b>	(3) youtube <i>megane sensei</i> , review lesson from today	Pretes 100/100	(write comment)
(date) Day	<b>Minna no Nihongo Leson 2: noun, <i>kore</i>,</b>	(3) youtube <i>megane sensei</i> , review lesson from today, <i>mondaishuu</i>	(fill in results)	(write comment)

	<i>sore, are</i>			
(date) Day	<b>Minna no Nihongo Lesson 3: noun place, koko, soko, asoko</b>	(Fill in plans)	(fill in results)	(write comment)
(date) Day	Grammar test Lesson 1-4	(Fill in plans)	(fill in results)	(write comment)

With adaptation from CMoore60 (2017)

As mentioned, answer towards Q14, in the survey question, "Lecturers need to provide an explanation on how to use online media", students want direction from lecturers. This answer indicates the need for guidance from lecturers regarding the use of online media. So that consultation and guidance on how to learn are also needed by students. This learning contract can be a realization of the desires or targets of students, who still feel the need for direction from lecturers. The teacher will direct how to find appropriate learning resources, how to use learning resources and the use of study time. In the end, each individual will determine for themselves how to utilize learning resources that suit individual needs.

## 5. Conclusion

From the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that students as adult learners who grew up in the digital era have utilized information technology to find answers to problems they face or to satisfy their curiosity about things they are interested in. However, in terms of the duration of access time, they still need direction on how the habit of accessing online media can help achieve their goals or learning targets. Because independent learning is the result of a process of learning how to learn, and the majority of students are accustomed to accessing online media, the habit of using online media as an independent learning medium is considered appropriate and guidance will be provided on how to achieve learning independence for new students in a structured manner. It is hoped that this activity will become a lifelong learning medium, which accustoms students to being able to diagnose themselves, set their learning targets, take assessments, conduct evaluations and improve their learning methods.

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