

23. Survey and Research for Developing Support Systems for Disaster-Related Learning

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(1) Purpose and Aim of Study

In recent years, various parts of Japan have experienced serious natural disasters involving typhoons, earthquakes, and other natural phenomena, which threaten the safety of people's lives. Victims have frequently included infants as well as elderly people with physical disabilities and compromised judgment. This points to the need for education (disaster-related learning) for protecting the vulnerable members of society as well as for protecting one's own life and property from natural disasters. In this context, voluntary disaster-related learning can be expected to have a long-term impact. The purpose of this study is to determine the requirements for developing support systems for voluntary disaster-related learning (learning programs and methodologies, educational materials, educational environment, instructors) that match local needs and conditions.

(2) Outline of Research Results

The principal findings of the study are as follows.

- Mass media, such as television, radio and newspapers, are important sources of information on natural disasters. It can be seen that one of the key points in disaster prevention education should be the development of proper appreciation for the accuracy and importance of information disseminated by the mass media.
- Of nearly equal importance to information contained in newspapers are stories and information received from family members, particularly from fathers and mothers. Among elementary and lower secondary school students, mothers play a more important role than fathers in providing information. Information from schoolteachers is of equal importance to information obtained from parents and becomes of more importance than information from parents as they move up from elementary school to lower secondary school. This shows that for both elementary and lower secondary school students, parents and teachers, with whom children are in daily

contact, play an important role in providing information on natural disasters. Consequently, the disaster-awareness levels of parents and teachers have an important bearing on disaster prevention education.

- Among lower secondary school students, mobile phones, personal computers, and the Internet serve as increasingly important sources of information. This is evidence that as students grow older they begin to collect information independently and through their own channels.
- While elementary and lower secondary school students frequently obtain information on natural disasters through classroom instruction, rarely do classrooms provide information on man-made disasters. Science classes provide opportunities for learning about natural disasters. Similar opportunities for learning about man-made disasters should be provided through some other classes and courses.
- Many children do not have knowledge of first-aid methods and responded that they did not know how to administer artificial respiration, apply an arm sling, or apply a bandage.