



The possibility of holistic safety education in Japan: From the perspective of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Yuto Kitamura

Graduate School of Education, The University of Tokyo, 7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan

ARTICLE INFO

Available online 20 May 2014

Keywords:

Safety education
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
Traffic safety
Daily life safety
Disaster safety
Japan

ABSTRACT

This paper studies modes of safety education, that is, education required for the development of a safe and secure society (i.e., a resilient and sustainable society), particularly in the context of Japan. In addition, this paper aims to verify what kind of safety education should be provided through the new educational concept of “Education for Sustainable Development” (ESD). In recent years, Japan has suffered a number of serious incidents in school zones, cases of children being kidnapped or killed, as well as the damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake & Tsunami of March 11, 2011, and other natural disasters. Consequently, the safety and security of children has become the responsibility of society as a whole, not just of educators. Based on this awareness, this paper will discuss a new mode of safety education that can contribute to the design of mobility for the coming age. There are two main findings from this study. First, the paper identifies the need to provide multiple software support for existing safety education. Few safety education programs have sufficiently incorporated the perspective of understanding safety in a comprehensive manner, instead focusing on a particular area of traffic, disasters, or daily life. In light of this issue, this paper recognizes the importance of incorporating the perspective of problem-solving and participation-oriented ESD into a holistic understanding of safety education. Second, awareness surveys conducted by the author on parents and teachers revealed that the respondents demonstrated a high interest traffic safety relative to other safety education areas. It would thus appear to be possible to make “traffic” the starting point for safety education and then broaden the scope to daily life and disasters. The survey also clarified that related parties considered raising children’s awareness to be the most important aspect in safety education.

This paper concludes that it is imperative to make continued research efforts to present a new mode of safety education, an initiative that represents one of the important efforts in designing mobility for the future.

© 2014 International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences. Production and hosting by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

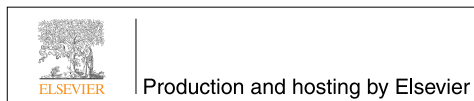
Today, the environment surrounding children is changing dramatically. A review of children’s situations from the perspectives of “safety” and “security” will reveal various kinds of risks, including traffic, crime and disaster. Do children have sufficient capabilities to respond to such risks? If not, how can they acquire such capabilities? With these interests and based on a holistic understanding of safety, this paper studies the shape of safety education, that is, education required for the development of a safe and secure society (i.e., a resilient and sustainable

society), particularly in the context of Japan. In addition to that objective, this paper aims to verify what kind of safety education should be provided through the new educational concept of “Education for Sustainable Development” (ESD).

Safety education in this paper refers to education that helps learners acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to protect themselves not only in emergencies, such as a traffic accident or a natural disaster, but also in everyday life; in more specific terms, it refers to traffic safety education, disaster prevention education and crime prevention education. The importance of these types of safety education is increasing. In recent years, Japan has suffered a number of serious incidents in school zones, cases of kidnapping and killing targeting children, as well as damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011 and other earthquakes. Consequently, considering the safety and security of children has become the responsibility of society as a whole, not just of educators. Based on this awareness, this paper will discuss a new shape of safety education.

E-mail address: yuto@p.u-tokyo.ac.jp.

Peer review under responsibility of International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences.



2. What is safety education?

Safety education is defined as education to facilitate the acquisition of capabilities to predict and avoid danger and qualities and capabilities to contribute to the safety of others or society.¹ Safety education deals with the areas of (1) daily life safety (which means safety against crime that could happen in everyday life), (2) traffic safety, and (3) disaster safety. Although conventional safety education has handled each of these areas individually, the Central Council for Education under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) pointed out the need for providing education across these areas for the purpose of considering the safety and security of children in their daily life in its 2008 report on the improvement of curriculum guidelines for kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools and special schools.

The report emphasizes the need to enhance holistic safety education covering safety of children's surroundings, traffic safety and disaster safety, with the goal of enabling children to make the right judgment about safety information and transfer the judgment to action for safety. In order to achieve that goal, or to help children acquire capabilities to predict and avoid danger to themselves and others, schools should work on safety education through overall education activities in light of the stage of development. By citing that reason, the report indicates the need to make children understand that, in order to secure safety, they must pay attention to their own mental and physical conditions as well as way of acting.

The report also emphasizes the importance of deepening the connection between schools, homes and local communities and improving the living environment throughout the entire country in providing such safety education. That reflects the idea that the connection between enhanced safety education and an improved living environment in the local community leads to the development of a sustainable society.

Enhancing safety education from that perspective, however, requires the development of interdisciplinary programs because the earlier-mentioned areas of safety range widely from daily life to traffic and disaster. It is also essential to think about safety education in consideration of children's surroundings. School training on appropriate actions may not enable children to protect themselves in a dangerous situation if it is provided without thinking about safety in light of the actual living environment. Therefore, in planning safety education, cooperation with the local community and the active involvement of parents and local residents must be encouraged. Furthermore, clearly positioning safety issues in local community's "town development" efforts is also required.

Another issue to be noted is the need to plan safety education in accordance with the children's stage of development or process of growth. The content of safety education must vary depending on changes in the children's living environment and their mental and physical development and personal growth. To take the example of traffic safety education for elementary school children, Japanese children, in general, start to use bicycles more frequently when they become fourth graders although conditions vary depending on the situation of the school or local community. That requires a shift in the focus of traffic safety education to bicycle activity from pedestrian activity for children up to the third grade. With such a change in children's behavior and according to their mental and physical development, necessary initiatives, such as protecting children from sexual violence in daily life safety education, must also be discussed.

Compared with elementary school students, junior high school students have a wider sphere of action as their school district is wider and their circle of friends becomes broader. This fact must be considered in safety education. It must also be required to develop cooperative

relationship beyond the level of schools, for example, cooperation between elementary schools and junior high schools, as well as cooperation between multiple schools in a school district (or multiple schools beyond a school district in some cases) when necessary.

Despite the importance of considering safety education from the multifaceted and holistic perspective, sufficient study results on school safety and safety education have not been accumulated, as pointed out in the previously-mentioned report by the Central Council for Education [3]. It is hard to say that multifaceted and holistic safety education has been developed based on objective evidence.

Meanwhile, as the importance of the previously-mentioned "development of a sustainable society" was emphasized in the curriculum guidelines revised in 2008 and 2009, awareness that the development of safe and secure society is essential to the development of a sustainable society gradually spread. One of the triggers of the argument is the stabbing spree at Ikeda Elementary School affiliated with Osaka Kyoiku University. The occurrence of other cases, accidents and natural disasters in which children became victims – particularly, the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011 and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station that had a major social impact, and fatalities of children (6–12 years old) on their ways to/from schools have been increasing in recent years [4] – highlighted the importance for children to have a minimum level of knowledge and behavior.

With the increasing social interest in children's safety, MEXT formulated the Plan on the Promotion of School Safety in April 2012, which requires all schools to develop a risk management manual. The MEXT plan also calls for the development of a plan to enhance safety education in teacher-training courses. It is mandated that the results of school-level plans must be reviewed periodically.

In light of cases in which children decided by themselves that the evacuation site was dangerous and took refuge in a safer place during the Great East Japan Earthquake, the MEXT plan points out that education that helps children develop the attitude to take proactive action must be covered in formulating a plan for safety education promotion. It suggests that, as health and physical education classes are not sufficient to nurture that attitude, time for other subjects, homeroom and special activities may be used.²

Additionally, in line with the concept of safety promotion,³ the MEXT plan stresses the significance of developing a mechanism to implement measures based on scientific evidence and conducting an assessment, and argues that it is indispensable to properly collect information about cases, accidents and disasters that happened at schools while paying due consideration to the burden on teachers, to analyze the information, and to take positive initiatives based on the analysis to decrease future cases, accidents and disasters.

Although the importance of promoting holistic safety education at the school level is widely recognized, schools, in fact, have not taken sufficient initiatives. This reality prompted MEXT to formulate the Plan on the Promotion of School Safety, but many schools that have already spent many class hours on school events besides ordinary classes cannot afford to include safety education in their curricula. By taking into the account this situation, MEXT calls for the flexible provision of safety education, the outlook is unclear as to how much initiative will be actually taken. It is necessary to continue to watch school initiatives and enhance administrative support for schools.

² The importance of safety education that encourages children to take proactive actions is exemplified in the so-called "Miracle in Kamaishi," a case in which many children survived the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami. In Kamaishi City, 99.8% of elementary and junior high school students evacuated safely because of the disaster prevention education that encourages children to think for themselves. For proactive safety education, refer to Shaw and Takeuchi [5], Teramoto [6] and Yamori [7].

³ Safety promotion means to prevent accidents and crimes with cross-occupation or cross-sector cooperation or with intervention that can be scientifically evaluated. Schools that are conducting activities linked to local-level safety promotion initiatives promoted by a collaborating center of the World Health Organization (WHO) are certified as international safety schools (ISS).

¹ For the definition of safety education, this paper referred to MEXT [1] and Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education [2]. These were also referred to in organizing concepts of safety education in this section.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1104634>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1104634>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)