

The Implementation of Short Drills as a Means of an Effective Educational Approach to Disaster Prevention

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The occurrence and aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake revealed the significance of taking an educational approach to disaster prevention. Despite the urgency for improvements in taking such approaches, many schools have yet to change.

This research will discuss a case study of Shirahata Elementary School, located in the City of Yokohama. The research began in June 2016, aiming at practicing and implementing effective measures of disaster prevention education. One of the measures of particular focus was the “short drill;” an alternative to conventional evacuation drills lacking in effectiveness. In the short drill, students are divided into two groups and are required to observe each other in reacting to the Early Earthquake Warning. Afterwards, upon the teacher’s facilitation, students are to give constructive feedback to each other regarding their evacuation actions. The short drills were conducted in varying situations intensively during a short time period, and were designed to nourish students’ abilities in making appropriate judgments that would lead to protecting their lives at the event of a disaster.

As a result, various changes suggesting the effectiveness of the short drills were observed in both students and teachers. Students’ evacuation behaviors increasing in speed and highly reasoned judgments, students’ awareness of preventive measures increasing, teachers discovering that there is no right answer to disaster prevention education--are all examples of these changes. This research will aim at revealing what these changes may imply in disaster prevention education in its entirety, by carefully analyzing how they influenced the school’s curriculum.

The utmost goal is for society as a whole to be prepared for coming disasters. In the presentation, we would like to discuss what the empowerment of children through education may imply in achieving this goal.