

Transformation of the Use of NHK's Services for School Education and Outlook for the Future Examined through the 60-year Research History

- Based on the NHK School Broadcast Utilization Surveys -

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(Summary)

NHK has been providing educational services for schools across Japan since the days of radio as an important mission of public service broadcaster. Radio school broadcast started in 1935, and TV school broadcast in 1953, at the same time as the commencement of TV broadcasting in Japan. Furthermore, NHK released online service, “NHK Digital Curriculum,” providing video and interactive-learning and teaching materials linked to school broadcast programs, in 2001 and keeps developing its services to meet the need in the digital age and the times of educational reform.

One of the factors that have been supporting Japan's school broadcast in its long history, which will soon mark its 80th anniversary, is research and studies. Analyzing the data accumulated by the “NHK School Broadcast Utilization Survey” series, which the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute has been conducting for more than 60 years since 1950, we can see how the utilization of school broadcast has transformed under the changing media environment. In the days of black-and-white television in the 1960s use of television rapidly spread at classrooms, and more and more schools began introducing school broadcast services, starting from elementary schools, followed by kindergartens and day-care centers, and secondary schools a little later. From the 1970s through the 1980s VTR became widely used, which changed the usage of broadcast programs in various ways, making them more convenient to use while impacting the scheduling of school broadcast programs. Besides, private companies started providing video learning materials in the market, which generated a competition between video materials and TV school broadcast programs.

The 1990s saw the expansion of usage of video learning materials and the spread of personal computers, and the 2000s the widespread of the Internet, all of which further facilitated the creation of multimedia environment at classrooms. As, the position of school broadcast, which had been commanding an overwhelming share, gradually became relatively lower, NHK itself started exploring the potential of educational services that employ new technology. “NHK Digital Curriculum” is the fruit of the effort, and now, more than ten years after the launch of the service, more schools, especially elementary schools, are starting using the service. We are now in an age where schools use NHK's educational services in diverse ways, via TV and/or PCs, to match the media environment at each classroom.

As the change in the media environment is expected to continue, in terms of public broadcasters' services for school education, it is important to place key emphasis on the provision of broadcast programs and other various content that carry the essence of teaching and learning and respond to the needs of the time, rather than to set a goal on the increase of the use of media, and it is also important for the public service broadcaster to recognize its role as an organizer that offers a learning place and serves as a liaison between members of the educational circle to promote multilateral learning. In conducting research and studies, content examination and method development with an eye to the changes of the times are also needed.