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Astrobiology classes at elementary schools in Japan

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We report an educational activity of the Astrobiology Class at elementary schools in Japan, performed from November 2007 to February 2008 and from November 2008 to January 2009. Astrobiology is an interdisciplinary field which consists of such as astronomy, planetary science, biology, and so on. Accordingly, we can efficiently combine many pieces of scientific topics into a spectacular scenario. This activity was organized by young scientists in many research areas in cooperation. The activity was conducted for all 5th year students at Yahata elementary school and Takasato elementary school in Japan. The significant properties of our activities in the elementary schools are: (1) that the series were prepared for 5th and 6th year students, (2) that the lesson plans were prepared along with the private policy of the school, (3) that graduate students made the lesson plans and indeed gave lessons (our lessons included laboratory exercises of DNA extraction, the experiment of magnetic field and the observation on fossils), (4) that teachers in the schools were in collaboration with graduate students to make the lesson plans, and (5) that we gave the lessons for every classroom. In this talk, we introduce our activity and discuss future possibilities.

Keywords: Astrobiology, elementary school, graduate school student, young scientists