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Education for Disaster Prevention at Lower Secondary School : Report on a Practice in Home Economics

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This is a report on the practice of disaster prevention education in Home Economics at a lower secondary school in Yamagata City where severe natural disasters have not affected since 1967. According to the courses of study (national curriculum) for lower secondary schools in Japan, safe indoor conditions to the risks such as natural hazards should be taught in Home Economics. The classes of safe indoor conditions to natural hazards spent two school hours out of seven hours allowed on the education unit of housing at seventh-grade at Yamagata Forth Junior High school. In the first hour of the two, the author from Yamagata University taught the hazard of the earthquake that would occur on the active fault at the western edge of Yamagata Basin, and the seismic intensity in the school district and the damage due to the earthquake estimated by Yamagata Prefectural Government. The students were then instructed to consider the risk in the bedroom of their own in case of strong earthquake shaking. They acquired the risk prevention methods such as removal of the bed from the place of overturning furniture, fixing furniture to the wall, and so on. In the second hour, the last hour of the unit, the students discussed the indoor safety and risk about the model room described in the textbook. The second class was instructed by the regular teachers (Ms. Ito and Ms. Suzuki) at the high school.

Questionnaires to the students were implemented before and after the first class and on six month after the classes. The results of the surveys show the positive effects of the classes to the students and their home. The awareness of the students to earthquake disaster were raised and the preparation for mitigation of the disaster at home were enhanced.

Keywords: earthquake disaster, education for disaster prevention, home economics, education of housing