

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Innovative and Informal Space Education (4)

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SPACE EDUCATION PROGRAM USING MARS LIKE HABITAT

Abstract

The article will portray a unique space education program, the first of its kind in Israel, in which students at ages 9-12 are learning in an environment simulating a mars base. We will discuss the evolution of the project, the technological aspects of creating a Mars base like classroom, and examine the essential and unique partnership between the staff of the school in which the program is running, the parents' leadership and the ties with various aerospace and other industries, who donated hardware, work force and money to the program.

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The space education program is running in a community school, in which 2 classes of each age groups of children learn space sciences classes once a week, during a three year program. The students learn in 2 classrooms – one is made out of an old cement truck, which was converted to a class room that resembles a mars habitat. On top of this spaceship like classroom there is a large moving antenna, for satcom applications. Both the truck and the sitcom equipment were donated by parents of students. Inside the classroom there is state of the art audio visual equipment.

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The second classroom resembles a mission control, and contain also a little space museum with various models, equipment and high altitude pressure suite (identical to the orange space suites of NASA) , donated by Israel air force. From that classroom, the students conduct "missions" speak with the other students inside the "spacecraft" using the internet and intercom. longer mission, including sleep time inside the spacecraft. In the summer vacation, student will conduct A robot will be incorporate in the mars terrain stimulant in the near future. A telescope, of which the students can connect via a web site, will be installed in 2010.

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The space education program will become a space sciences education center, for students and educators alike, from across the country. It was acknowledged by the ministry of education as an experimental education program. NASA astronaut, who visited the school, expressed his enthusiasm and helped the school to take part in various NASA activities – such as a live conversation with astronauts on board the international space station.

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The project is organized by the space research center of Israel's Fisher institute for air and space strategic studies, and got the official support of the Israeli space agency. We will welcome the participation of students from other countries, by E learning.