

WELCOME ON BEHALF OF MPTL

Leopold Mathelitsch, *Responsible of MPTL*

Dear honorary guests, dear colleagues,

On behalf of the MPTL, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you to our annual meeting, to MPTL14, taking place here in Udine.

At the closing ceremony of the last MPTL workshop, which was a joint meeting with the biannual GIREP-conference, I made two announcements:

Firstly, I showed some photos of Udine and the surrounding region and praised the beauty of the town and of the countryside. I hope that you had already some time looking around and for finding out that my statement was no exaggeration.

Secondly, I made remark that Professor Marisa Michelini has proven already in the past to be an excellent manager and organizer, and that she, together with her team, will provide for a great workshop. This was an understatement: as it is clear already now, MPTL14 will be a workshop full of records.

The first record belongs to you – in all thirteen workshops till now, we never had so many participants. Thank you for your interest and for coming.

Of course, this made the organization not easier, and for the first time, we had to install parallel sessions. But nevertheless, this meeting did not move towards a conference in the typical way, it still holds our traditional style of workshops. Namely, it is a meeting to which the participants contribute to a very large extent. This led also to a record on the number of contributions.

This workshop has been given two guiding principles by Prof. Michelini, one is tradition, the other innovation. And indeed, this is another record, we never had so many innovations. Thanks to Prof. Michelini for these important and spirited steps forward. Let me give some examples of both, tradition and innovation.

Tradition is the way we always had a special poster session, an interactive poster session, where the participants had time and space to present their products to the other interested colleagues. New is that a five-minutes-videos is produced so that this information can be made available for the others.

Tradition is that we also have a typical poster session. New is that a prize will be given to the best poster presented by a student, and I am already curious about this competition.

Tradition is that the contributions are published electronically. New is that also paper-book will be published with the best contribution resulting from a refined refereeing process.

Tradition is that multimedia on the university level is in the center of consideration on our workshops. We also have extended the level to high school physics. That means that on the one hand we evaluated also material of very basic physics, on the other hand teachers were invited to our workshops, and lectures of the workshop gave additional seminars to them. But pedagogic research has shown in the past years, how important the first steps of young people are towards a certain topic or subject. With regard to multimedia, young children are used to it, they are “digital natives” as Mark Prensky calls them in his book. So, the question is, how to use this potential with regard to teaching a specific subject.

Here, again tradition was broken and for the first time a general talk on primary level science education is included in our workshop.

Tradition is that a group within MPTL evaluates software of a certain field of physics resulting in recommendations on the best products. For some years we have been collaborating with MERLOT, which stands for Multimedia Resource for Learning and Online Teaching. It is a consortium of mainly American universities, with the aim to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by increasing the quantity and quality of peer reviewed online learning materials. This work belongs to 20 disciplines, physics being one of them. Our cooperation works such that the European and the American group do independent evaluations and then compare their outcome. This has been done also this year with the example of optics and waves. But for the first time we used an online forum, and I want to thank in particular Bruce Mason for his effort and I want to welcome him here in Udine.

This brings me to another group of scientists, with whom MPTL has had a very fruitful collaboration, namely COLOS, which stands for Conceptual Learning on Physics. This group has been holding its annual meeting in combination with the MPTL meeting for the last years, and this cooperation has proven of mutual benefit for both groups. I welcome the members of COLOS, in particular their president, Francisco Esquembre.

The MPTL workshops have always been under the patronage of EPS, the European Physical Society. We appreciate it very much to be under the umbrella of this important association. It provides also possibilities for grants for young colleagues. I welcome representatives from EPS, Robert Lambourne and Urban Titulaer, and I express our severe thanks.

At the end I want to thank the city of Udine as well as the University of Udine for their hospitality and support. I want to express again my sincere thanks to Prof. Michelini and her team for the immense work organizing this workshop.

Again a warm welcome to you all. I wish you an interesting and enjoyable workshop.