



Report on the 2012 edition of GIFT

The 10th edition of the GIFT (Geosciences Information For Teachers) Workshop took place on 23–25 April at the EGU General Assembly, starting with the traditional visit and ice-breaker party in Vienna's Museum of Natural Sciences on Sunday April 22.



The 2012 GIFT group at the EGU General Assembly.

The general theme of this year's workshop, which united 80 teachers from 19 different countries, was 'Water!'. Leading scientists in the field (Alberto Montanari, Gilles Bœuf, Murugesu Sivapalan, Günter Blöeschl, Hubert Savenije, Pierre-Philippe Mathieu, Mario Rebolledo, and Nick van de Giesen) gave presentations on the current major problems of the water cycle, including water availability and distribution, biological significance of water, floods, water pollution, research for underground water, and atmospheric processes contributing to the water cycle and water management.

Some teachers also gave presentations (teacher-to-teacher communications) on their school projects aimed to improve the understanding of the water cycle. Hands-on activities were also present in this year's workshop. They were of particular interest, turning the GIFT lecture room into a laboratory for an afternoon as François Tilquin, a French teacher, presented a project on piezometric mapping and underground water modeling.

In the past three years, the GIFT Workshop has also included a poster session, Science in Tomorrow's Classroom. This year, teachers presented 34 posters, demonstrating the activities they use to engage their students in a variety of science subjects and community outreach. This forum resulted in a great deal of discussions among teachers for sharing teaching strategies and making connections for future cooperation between their schools. For many teachers, it was the first opportunity to produce a poster, and several teachers realized that posters can be used in their schools to highlight to other students, teachers, and the community, the exceptional work they and their students carry out.

The 2012 GIFT Workshop marks the 10th anniversary of this activity, which has been the driving force for advancing the importance of education at EGU. The initial GIFT Workshop model at the General Assembly has grown into a multi-faceted educational outreach

effort that now includes distinguished lecturers, teachers at sea, video-conferences and Powerpoint presentations of GIFT lectures that can be downloaded for classroom use. This effort has resulted, particularly this year, in many exchanges and networking between the participating teachers post-GIFT, which bodes well for pan-European and international links in the future.

Also, in the 10 years of existence, the GIFT Workshops have built a [library of digital material](#) that teachers all over the world can use with their pupils in the classroom:

- Presentations of all invited speakers are available for download, free from copyrights, as PDF files.
- Selected lectures have been video-recorded and mounted online for use in the classroom. The GIFT library will have 24 online presentations including seven new ones recorded in 2012, available starting September 2012. In addition, interviews, extra videos, and photographic collections are available to teachers to illustrate the initiative to their colleagues and students.
- Occasionally, additional material provided by speakers is placed online, including the presentations given at the Alexander von Humboldt GIFT workshops.

Feedback from participating teachers

"[François Tilquin's presentation] is how teaching should be done, nowadays it has become so prescriptive and textbook, how great to see such an enthusiastic practitioner" – Sarah Calne, UK

"I have just come back home and I want to thank you for the opportunity you gave me to take part in this activity. It was amazing; I am still fascinated and impressed!" – Ramona Retegan, Romania

"At a time when funding and support for teachers is being cut in school systems across the world, I am so pleased to see the level of dedication of the Committee on Education of the European Geosciences Union. Your committee put together an extremely amazing conference and a learning experience that I will be able to share with my students for years to come." – Kisha Davies-Caldwell, USA

"[The main benefits are] contact with foreign teachers in the aim of future exchanges (experiments and also true exchange with students), because it's an incredible opportunity to meet colleagues, to know them, and to be able to stay in touch for working together after the GIFT." – Karine Tardy, France

"It was pleasure to be part of something so great" – Petra Skoupi-lova, Czech Republic

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