2012 Masterclasses in France: debriefing meeting

Meeting date: April 17th, version 3

Attendance: Yann Coadou, Julien Cogan & Magali Damoiseau (CPPM, Marseille), Eric Conte & Pierre Van Hove (IPHC, Strasbourg), Viola Sordini (IPNL, Lyon), Sophie Cavata (IRFU, Saclay), Nicolas Arnaud (LAL, Orsay), Jean-Pierre Lees (LAPP, Annecy), Olivier Drapier (LLR, Palaiseau), Régis Lefevre & Stéphane Monteil (LPC, Clermont-Ferrand), Laurence Marquet (LPNHE, Paris), Corinne Berat (LPSC, Grenoble).

French sessions in a nutshell
- 10 IN2P3 labs
- 25 sessions (~1000 students+teachers): 16 ATLAS, 6 CMS, 3 ALICE
- Tiring and time-consuming local organizations but very rewarding sessions: **all labs are willing to participate again in 2013, with at least as many sessions as this year!** Most labs are close to their plateau given the available resources (limits are manpower- and or infrastructure-related depending on the sites).
  => **In the following, we focus on the difficulties we had and on the things which could still be improved. Not on what worked well!**
- **No major issue overall: a few minor problems with exercises and videoconferences**; only one (really bad) session due to a bad (uninterested) audience.
- **Central support from the IN2P3** to fund lunches and coffee breaks – **about 6.5 k€ total**.
- **An 11th IN2P3 lab should join in 2013, such as the CEA/Irfu Saclay.**

Exercises

- A general comment/question: the exercises have complicated physics goals but they are easy (and repetitive) once the students have understood the procedure. **How can we make sure that students won't think that physicist daily activities are boring?**

- **Do we expect the exercises to be stable next year/in the coming years?**
  => If not, people would like to have more time to translate the new parts and to avoid the Xmas+New Year period.
- **What do we do if the discovery/non-existence of the Higgs is announced by the end of the year? Do we anticipate this by preparing 'light' (no website, limited translation) exercises just in case or do we postpone this to 2014?**

- There were some (small) bugs in the exercises during the first sessions. **Could the authors of each exercise organize a 'dry session' prior to the first official session to make sure that everything works well?**

- **CMS**
  / W+Z exercise more complex than last year's J/Psi exercise: more concepts needed – but also more interesting.
  / Combination of results easier than last year thanks to the online spreadsheet. Yet, **global combination of results was very painful => a procedure similar to the one used in the ATLAS W exercise should be implemented for next year – more generally, one**

should try to pool the parts which are common to all exercises and which work well in a given exercise. Strasbourg people did improve the spreadsheet for their sessions (all participating institutions should have benefited from their changes) but, apparently, the info wasn't passed on to the other CMS sessions.

/ **Problem to use the event display with Firefox on linux** – works better with Opera. Given that some institutes rely on computers they don't own (university computer rooms, etc.) and on which they can't install much software, it would be good if the software could work with more browsers.

- **ATLAS**
/ **Could the default setting of the event display be changed so that tracks are displayed by default**?
/ **Several people did not understand how the MC WW opening angle histograms were constructed** – the shapes looked different from one institute to the other.

Videoconference
- Moderators better prepared – but some (a few) still don't follow the expected agenda
- **Moderators should not hesitate to stop 'talkative' institutes which are asking several questions in a row**. One should use a 'round robin' organization instead: 1 question per lab, one lab after the other.
- Some people still think **the videoconference is long** – regardless of the actual English level of the students – as it comes after a dense day.
- There are **still issues with sites late and/or with very bad connection => 2 proposals**:
1) **force the participating sites to be up and ready at least 5-10 minutes before the official starting time of the videoconference** (often, IT support deals with this part of the session while the exercise is still ongoing elsewhere).
2) **Mute and/or disconnect sites which make the videoconference confusing** – in Vydio do the CERN moderators have such special privileges?
- **Vydio tests were useful**.

Quiz
- There were at least 2 sessions in which all the questions were asked first, followed by all the answers. This wasn't the expected procedure was it?
- **The majority of the French labs would prefer an offline quiz following the end of the videoconference** but there are mixed feelings among the labs => no consensus.
Pro offline arguments:
/ Day is long; people are tired
/ Lack of time to discuss the answers – in some sessions there was a 30' Q&A slot after the videoconference.
/ Too fast for students not all fluent in English / CERN transmission muted during the quiz
Pro online arguments:
/ only moment when all students from all institutions do the same thing at the same time.
/ Fun to see other people's reactions.

Planning
- **Could the delay between the time when the Masterclass period is announced and the moment when labs know their timeslots be shortened?** In this scenario, 'late'

institutes would have to fill the slots still available but wouldn't delay the whole process. This is especially important for institutes which need to use external computer rooms where they are usually not priority.

- **Wouldn't it be possible to have a web interface where institutes register themselves to sessions where there are still free slots?** Something like a webpage to sign up for shifts.
- For some institutes, the actual dates of the Masterclass sessions matter more than the exercises.

Session organisation
- **In some labs, tutors visited the students prior to the Masterclass** in order to introduce them to the topic and also to make the teaching part of the session 'lighter'.