Association for Science Education

Annual Conference 2010

University of Nottingham

7th – 9th January



**Frontier Science**

**Retention in PGCE Shortage Subject (Science) Areas**

(Phil Collins, University of Worcester, Institute of Education)

Science Student Retention

**Synopsis**

Recruitment on to secondary PGCE science programmes in shortage subjects has been a concern for the Training and Development Agency for some time. What is equally concerning are retention rates during training. The main reasons why students withdraw have been identified but strategies to retain them are not so clearly identifiable. This discussion group will explore best practice for retention from the perspective of the initial teacher trainer and the speaker will outline research being done at the University of Worcester Institute of Education into retention in shortage PGCE science subject areas.

**Outcomes**

Attendees unanimously agreed with the suggestions made during the presentation which indicates that the problem with retention is national and those who withdraw have similarities in profile. There were many interesting angles explored i.e. the need to be positive in the choice of question for a focus group.

Discussion group attendees included representatives from:

* Institute of Physics
* Gatsby Charitable Foundation
* National Strategy Team
* Learning Skills Network
* Sheffield Hallam University
* Nottingham Trent University

The discussions were supported by Linda Scott, University of Worcester.

All the evaluation sheets graded the session as very good or good.(The categories were poor, average, good, very good.)

As a direct result of the interest generated at the discussion, Linda and I were approached by a tutor from the University of York representing the Association of Tutors in Science Education (ATSE) which is a branch of the ASE. He would like me to write an article on the findings of the research to date for the ATSE Journal, **Science Teacher Education**. He also asked Linda if she would join the editorial team for the journal.

Also after the session I was approached by a representative of the Learning Skills Network who are piloting a mentoring scheme directed towards new science teachers called **Starting Out** which is being funded by the TDA.

Sue Howarth and I have met with the Regional Coordinator and we have been offered places on the scheme for our students. One imput will be support for the focus group which I have set up as part of my research. I would like to take the offer up if you will support it.

Appendices

* Session Power Point
* Details about the Starting Out Scheme
* Copy of the ATSE Journal