

Differentiating Rural District Delivery for Gifted Learners

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Western Australia
2008

District Dynamics

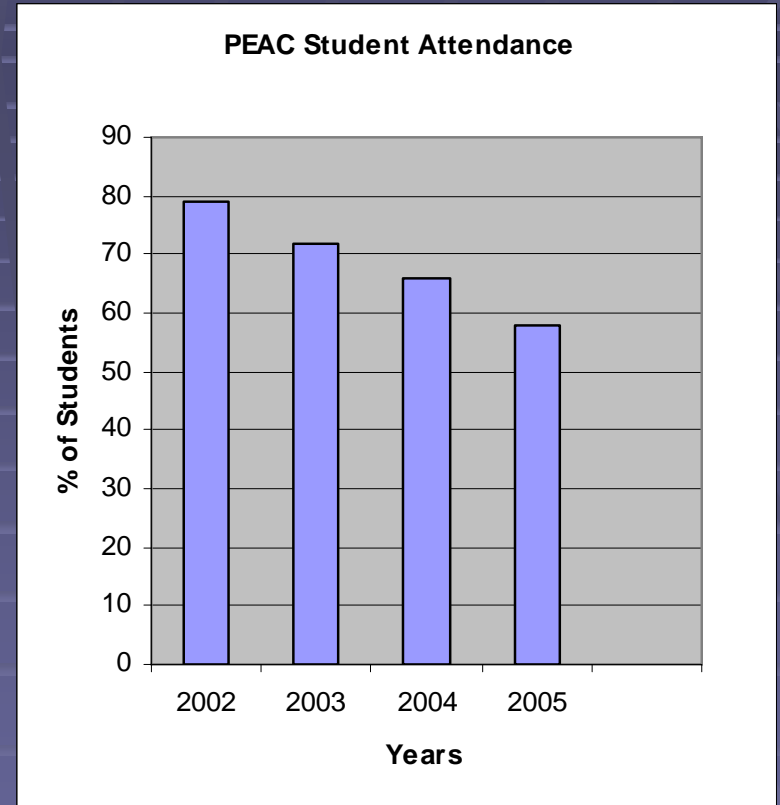
- WBED is located on the southwest corner of Western Australia
- Is an average of 3-4 hours from the nearest city; Perth
- Covers a landmass greater than 1.7 million square hectares
- Has 26 schools scattered over this area
- Caters for an average of 35 Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) students aged between 10 and 12 each school year
- 2008 we have 33 PEAC students

History of WBED Gifted & Talented Provision

- Pre 2006; PEAC students were offered courses and activities at locations other than at their own school
- Contact time for PEAC was for one ½ day every 2 weeks.
- Only one course could be offered at a time
- Courses not linked to mainstream learning
- No meaningful audience for students to demonstrate learning
- Strong academic basis to content
- Parents transported students

Observations

- Student attendance was on a dramatic and steady decline
- PEAC activities/camp not supported
- Courses not related to student specific talents and interests
- Course assessment not related to student progress
- Significant hours of 'learning time' lost to travel
- Disruptive to students mainstream learning and having negative impact on social development



10 Key Components of Change

- Reduce interruption to mainstream learning
- Be inclusive not exclusive (Curriculum Framework, WA, 2006)
- Address higher learning potential of the individual on a *daily* basis (Allan, 1991)
- Be motivational and meaningful to the students
- Reduce negative social impact
- Connect extension content to mainstream outcomes
- Provide opportunity to incorporate student passions in their learning (Johnsen, 2004)
- Provide a meaningful audience for demonstration of attained skills or completed tasks
- Include frequent face-to-face interaction with like minded students
- Be time efficient

The New Model

PEAC

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graph TD; PEAC[PEAC] --> School[School]; PEAC --> Online[Online]; PEAC --> Withdrawal[Withdrawal]; School --> S1[• Content Differentiation]; School --> S2[• Mainstream in-class levelling (Betts & Neihart, 1988)]; School --> S3[• Opportunity to incorporate individual areas of passion into student learning]; Online --> O1[• Video conferencing]; Online --> O2[• Online 'Virtual' classrooms & specialist workshops (Hiltz, 1994)]; Online --> O3[• Blogging]; Online --> O4[• Mentoring]; Withdrawal --> W1[• Inter-district PEAC Challenge events]; Withdrawal --> W2[• PEAC workshops]; Withdrawal --> W3[• PEAC Presentation Day]; Withdrawal --> W4[• PEAC Challenge Camp];
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School

- **Content Differentiation**
- **Mainstream in-class levelling** (Betts & Neihart, 1988)
- **Opportunity to incorporate individual areas of passion into student learning**

Online

- **Video conferencing**
- **Online 'Virtual' classrooms & specialist workshops** (Hiltz, 1994)
- **Blogging**
- **Mentoring**

Withdrawal

- **Inter-district PEAC Challenge events**
- **PEAC workshops**
- **PEAC Presentation Day**
- **PEAC Challenge Camp**

What we needed for this to work?

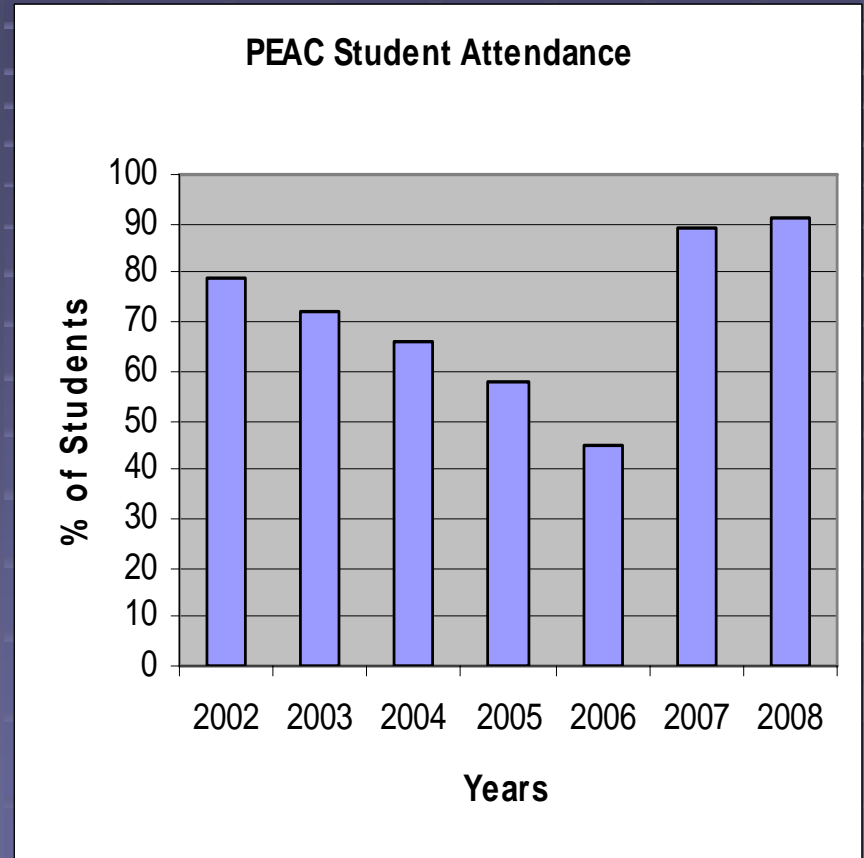
- Establish a 'Teachers of PEAC Students' network
- Development of Teacher specific skills (Rogers,1989)
- Compile individual student data and produce individual student profiles
- Develop documented plans for each PEAC student based on this information
- Provide time and money
- Appoint a Coordinator

Role of the Coordinator

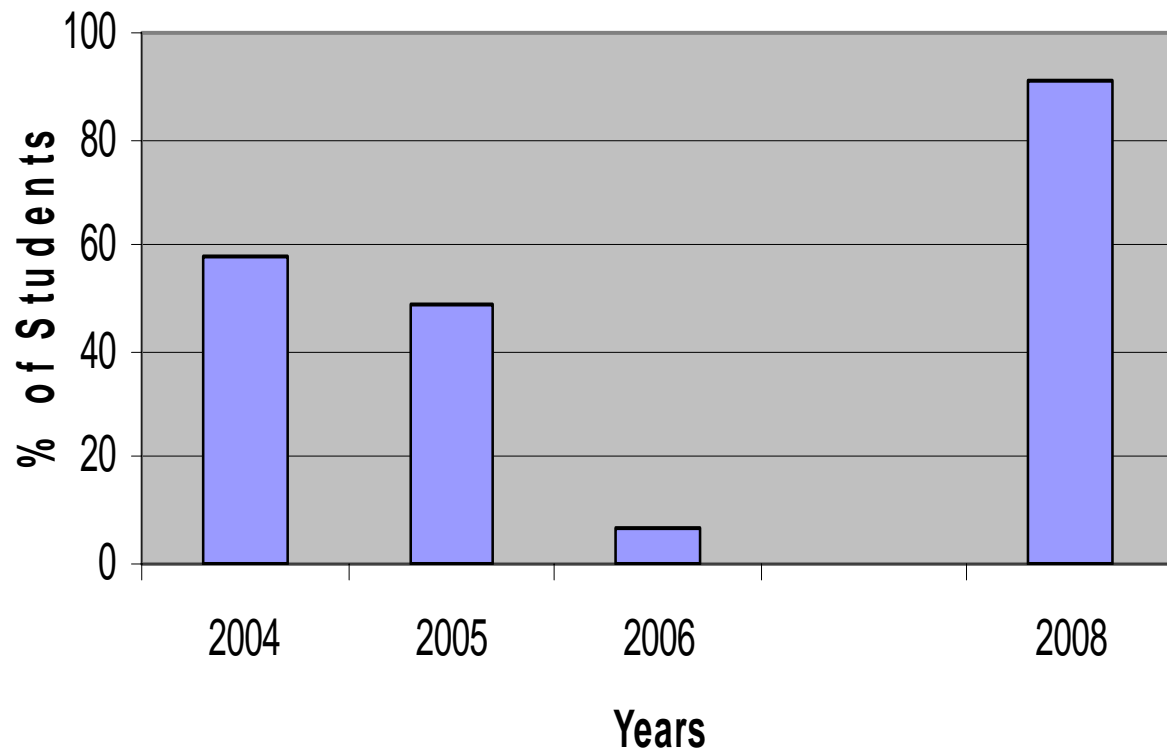
- Promote concept in schools and in the community
- Run workshops for relevant staff and establish the network
- Support teachers with the development of student profiles and documented plans
- Be a resource for teachers, families & schools
- Establish and run online provision components (Hiltz, 1994)
- Coordinate non-school based activities
- Ensure all documented plans and student profiles are attached to student information systems

The Results

- 2006 saw a continued decrease in student engagement
- 2007-2008 has seen a significant increase in student engagement and participation



PEAC Camp Attendance



What they say;

“I am so amazed at the improvement in Ben’s classroom conduct and general behaviour since we implemented his documented plan. He is like a totally different kid!”
(Yr6 Teacher)

“We have always known that Nathan was talented in Math but this new PEAC plan has really made a difference to his achievement in his other subjects as well. I think he actually enjoys school this year” (2007 Parent)

“I use to get sick and miss school a lot but now I don’t anymore. I definitely don’t get sick on Wednesdays and Thursdays” (Yr6 ‘Challenging’ PEAC student) (Betts, 1988)

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