Gifted Learners with Disability (GLD)

Potentially dangerous and spurious

ideologies, theories, approaches,

constructs and distractors

which have created barriers for GLD

Current Barriers:

Euphemisms - which harm GLD when applying for disability adjustments (aka 'AARA') for classroom activities and for exams

- '**Twice-exceptional'**, '2e'
- '**Neurodivergent'** [NB: NOT 'neurodiverse'] a truism with a costume on
- **Non-standard** diagnoses – eg dysgraphia, ADD, NLD, APD, PDA, SPD
- Learning '**difficulty**', learning 'difference', learning 'challenge'

'Strength-based' approaches for GLD - at the expense of **remedial** intervention designed to address (if possible) the concomitant disability

Social model of disability

- **Eschewing** standard **medical** diagnoses and professional measurements of levels of impairment – "no need to 'fix' children since they are not 'broken'"; "fix environment, not child"
- Websites' **simplistic,** misleading interpretations of Australian disability **legislation** affecting GLD - raises parent expectations unnecessarily
- Reliance on **UN** conventions, as if are enforceable in Australia

Differentiation or **UDL** or **MTSS -** in a mixed-ability setting – which many teachers find 'too hard', and which never seem to 'work', despite claims that mainstream teachers need to learn to meet all students' needs through differentiation and UDL and MTSS

A govt capriciously **deleting its gifted policy** without fanfare, explanation or justification (and with it, acknowledgement of the very existence of GLD)

Full inclusion ideology, with all its strict government and ideological rules and requirements, may result in GLD having neither their giftedness nor their disability needs met at school. Below are some of the more radical positions adopted by some governments and some progressive academics and some in the more vociferous, generously government funded advocacy associations – contrafactual assertions such as:

- all children should be kept in the same mainstream classroom with '**similar age** peers' – implications for acceleration of gifted
- **all stages** of readiness to learn should be found in each mainstream classroom – results in huge range in each classroom – 5-6 years
- all children should be taught the **same** mandated **curriculum** in one group in the same mainstream classroom
- all **special schools** (however called) should be closed - even if mainstream is not yet ready to address their current students' needs.

Otherwise, mainstream will have no motivation to be bothered becoming what they need to become to accommodate mandated full inclusion.) Special schools represent 'segregation'.

- full inclusion is always best for **all** children, **with and WITHOUT** disability and is **internationally** accepted as such and universally desired by parents
- children with **severe and complex disability** in mainstream should always have their needs met first, before other children, with or without disability – implications for **disruptive** classrooms
- **remediation**, pull-out programs, grouping should be downscaled or prohibited, because they are disrespectful in that they call attention to the child, and represent the ideology of so-called 'othering' – in-class 'adjustments' preferred – implications for exams later
- teachers' lack of **training in special education,** remediation methods etc need not be addressed and indeed ITE institutions should be pressured to no longer offer special ed in ITE or allow teachers to specialise in special ed. Whatever they used to do can be done quite well now by the regular mainstream teacher or an 'inclusion coach' with a bit of extra PD
- teachers should **preference 'wellbeing'** and SEL over academic subjects
- teachers **overwork**, overburdening with tasks, burnout, quitting, rushing to **move** into jobs in Catholic and independent **sectors** (or wanting to…)
- teachers' **code of conduct** prevents public opposition

Year 12 final exam **adjustments** harder to get for GLD than for non-gifted

Former Barriers:

Dabrowski **Overexcitabilities - Psychologists** purporting to identify giftedness but not disability

Multiple intelligences

Learning styles, teaching styles and left/right brain thinking

Self-esteem movement, **mindset** ideology

Commercial edu-business **neuro-babble** programs/remedies/cures with slick marketing programs and glowing testimonials – eg, neurofeedback, brain 'rewiring' programs (such as Arrowsmith, Cogmed, Dore, Brain Gym, Tomatis, Somatis)

Inquiry-based or project-based learning at the expense of prior explicit teaching and acquiring of a sound knowledge base

Balanced literacy, Reading Recovery, glance-and-guess **reading** programs, special fonts

Restricted **diets** or vitamins, alternative medicines, curly straws, sleep regimes

Overseas **misdiagnosis** scare and simplistic 'either/or' **checklists** which parents are encouraged to rely on instead of consulting professionals (eg, gifted vs bright; vs ADHD)

Disclaimer: Information contained in this handout, and in the oral presentation for which it has been used, is not legal advice. Some material has been adapted and summarised to simplify the message. If in doubt, consult a legal practitioner specialising in disability discrimination.

To learn more about GLD or to join GLD Australia, contact Carol Barnes: carol@bartink.com.au