Reenvisioning Gifted Education in British Columbia: A Qualitative Research Protocol of Policy Analysis in the Context of a Redesigned Curriculum

C. Owen Lo1, Yuen Sze Michelle Tan2, Megan Chrostowski1, Shun-Fu Hu1, Diana Chan1, Deanna M. Sue1, I-Chen Wu1, and Wei Li1

Abstract

Background: British Columbia (BC) is undergoing a curriculum migration. While the new curriculum highlights elements inspired by gifted education practices, there has been little conversation on how gifted education should/could be situated in this new curricular context. Moreover, a shift in the field of gifted education toward more inclusive practices aiming to promote gifted learning for all students has emerged. Taken together, this project highlights a unique juncture that invites a critical examination of the current provincial policy on gifted education and presents opportunities for sustaining better alignment between gifted education philosophy and local policies and practices.

Aims: To examine the epistemic understandings of giftedness reflected in BC gifted education policy and to identify incongruence between this policy and the redesigned curriculum.

Objectives: (1) To construct a historical and archival account of gifted education policy context in BC, (2) to evaluate the conceptualization of giftedness as reflected in BC policy texts, and (3) to provide insights into how policies and practices might be reconfigured.

Methods: This project uses a case study method with a focus on evaluation to generate an in-depth account of the policy context and to develop a critical understanding of potential issues. Research participants include two to three provincial-level policy makers, 60 policy linkers, and two policy informers who have expertise in gifted education. Qualitative data include legislative and supplementary documents, interviews, and memos and field notes. Quantitative data will be gathered through the administration of an online survey.

Significance: This project will uncover the merits, issues, and opportunities of gifted education policy in BC and enhance the connectivity between gifted education philosophy and local policy and practices. The results will further contribute to professional development opportunities for teachers and school districts to help improve their supports for students with advanced learning needs within the new curricular context.

Keywords

case study, mixed methods, narrative inquiry, methods in qualitative inquiry, Glaserian grounded theory, qualitative evaluation

Background and Study Justification

This project proposes to examine issues and opportunities surrounding gifted education policy in British Columbia (BC). This project is timely and significant for the following reasons.

First, BC has a long history of providing mandated special education services to students with special needs, including those who exhibit advanced learning needs and require gifted education services. The first recorded legislative activity to provide special education services dates back to 1890. In 1955, the provincial government introduced funding for special education programs as part of the basic grant to school districts. During the 1970s, a Special Education Division within the

\[1\] Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

\[2\] Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Corresponding Author:
C. Owen Lo, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6T 1Z4
Email: owen.lo@ubc.ca

Creative Commons CC BY: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) which permits any use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the SAGE and Open Access pages (https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/open-access-at-sage).
Ministry of Education was created to assist local school districts in developing special education programs and services. The current policy concerning students with special needs is outlined in Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines (henceforth the Manual, BC Ministry of Education, 2006). The Manual was initially issued in 1995 and later revised in 2006. It serves as the legal ground for a wide range of students with special needs, including students who are considered gifted, to request and access equitable and appropriate educational services. Correspondingly, the Manual reflects the growing impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms enacted in 1984, which enshrines the right of all children to an appropriate education. It also highlights nonsegregated practices influenced by the inclusive schooling movement that has flourished in the province since the 1980s. Notwithstanding the long history of special education legislation in BC, evaluation of such policies is scarce. With regard to gifted education, while a provincial policy has been in place since 1995 (when the Manual was first published), it has never been systematically examined or evaluated. Consequently, there is a lack of documentation and public discourse concerning the making, implementation, or evaluation of this policy. Without such evaluative efforts, it is difficult to trace accountability and analyze the effectiveness of this policy. Furthermore, the lack of evaluation also poses challenges for generating evidence-based suggestions that could inform further revisions and improvements to the policy.

Currently, the BC Ministry of Education (2015) is implementing a redesigned provincial curriculum that focuses on fostering students’ thinking capabilities and skills for adapting to our fast-changing world. With a trial implementation that began in 2015, the BC Ministry of Education expects the new curriculum to be fully implemented across all K–12 schools in BC by the 2019–2020 school year. While the new curriculum speaks to many pedagogical elements that have been highlighted in gifted education in the past (such as concept-based learning, inquiry-based learning, critical and creative thinking skills, and flexible programming), there has been little conversation between the provincial government and academia (i.e., field researchers in provincial universities) on how the gifted education policy should be updated to better address the new curricular context and how gifted education should/could be situated within the new curricular context. This further emphasizes the urgent need for an examination of gifted education policy in the context of BC’s newly redesigned curriculum.

Moreover, as the conceptualization of giftedness evolves, the field of gifted education has undergone major paradigm shifts since the early 20th century. While a core purpose remains serving students who are considered gifted/exceptionally advanced, a shift toward more inclusive practices that promote gifted learning for all students has emerged since the beginning of the 21st century. An examination of the epistemological underpinnings of giftedness outlined in the Manual is timely and necessary as it will help to sustain better alignment between gifted education philosophy and local policies and practices.

In sum, the confluence of these three factors suggests that the current policy is dated and thus creates a timely opportunity for (1) a critical investigation into the gifted education policy context started in 1995 and (2) identification of potential new directions for reforming gifted education policy and practices to fit the new curricular context.

Theoretical Framework: Richness in Giftedness Conceptualization

After a century of development, gifted education has evolved into a distinct educational discipline with well-designed pedagogy and research agendas (Tannenbaum, 2000). The notion of giftedness has departed from a narrow association with high IQ (i.e., seeing giftedness as a psychometric condition, such as surpassing an IQ of 130) to focus more on the fluid disparities between a learner and a local curriculum (i.e., seeing giftedness as conditional learning needs contingent upon the dynamic between an individual and the environment where he or she situates). That is, the purpose of gifted education is to meet the learning needs of an advanced learner that cannot be otherwise fulfilled through the implementation of a regular curriculum in a local context. While gifted education is still, largely and mistakenly, viewed as elitist (Matthews & Dai, 2014; Sapon-Shevin, 2000), it has undergone several major conceptual changes and now embraces inclusive (i.e., nonsegregated) and democratic practices that eschew elitism and entrenched social gaps (Lo, 2014b; Lo & Porath, 2017).

In the “paradigm shifts framework of gifted education” (PSF-GT) elaborated by Lo and Porath (2017), three major epistemologically distinct paradigms in gifted education, namely demystification, identification, and transaction, were identified. This research project adopts PSF-GT as the guiding theoretical framework for evaluating the epistemological understanding of giftedness reflected in BC gifted education policy as well as a touchstone for informing suggestions for teacher training, school programming, and policy making. PSF-GT (outlined below) elucidates major changes in the conceptualization of giftedness over the past 150 years.

Paradigm of Demystification: Giftedness as Manifested Wonders

Before systematic studies of giftedness, it was understood as a mysterious and divine quality and was often associated with superstition. In the late 19th century, under the dominant influence of positivism, giftedness began to be treated as a scientific topic. Early studies of giftedness sought to demystify the construct and discover the etiology of giftedness through systematic investigation. However, this scientific enthusiasm was not translated to the field of education since the concurrent movement to standardize education (see Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2015) concerned itself more with producing a quality work force for industry rather than fulfilling the potential and needs of each individual.
**Paradigm of Identification: Giftedness as Measurable Predictions**

In the 1920s, the emergence of intelligence tests, in combination with an education movement that centralized individual differences via educational placement, sets the foundation of modern gifted education (Lo & Porath, 2017). As a case in point, the term “gifted” started to appear on the title pages of educational books for individual differences (e.g., Henry, 1920; Hollingworth, 1926; Stedman, 1924). The confluence of psychometric studies on individual differences and a compulsory education movement provided momentum for formal gifted education relying heavily on IQ-based identification (Borland, 2005; Lo & Porath, 2017). While this positivist practice of identification remains prominent, the definition of giftedness has been extended from a narrow perspective (i.e., seeing giftedness as a steady and unchangeable trait associated with high IQ only) to a more expansive perspective that conceptualizes giftedness as plural (e.g., multiple intelligences, see Gardner, 2006) and developing over time (Morelock, 1996). Moreover, current practices highlight the necessity of identifying gifted individuals by removing undemocratic constraints (e.g., gender, race, socioeconomic status) and empowering individuals who are considered disadvantaged in order to ensure greater social equality and diversity (Matthews & Dai, 2014). For example, in 1989, the Vancouver School Board instituted programs designed to meet the needs of students who are considered gifted and have an accompanying disability (commonly described as twice exceptional; Bees, 1998).

**Paradigm of Transaction: Giftedness as Effectuation of Human Possibilities**

In recent years, an emergent alternative interpretation of giftedness has attracted scholarly attention. Researchers and educators have started to critically reflect on the underlying assumptions of an identification-based ontology of giftedness and the practices that it engenders. First, the heavy focus on identification reflecting “a reductionist belief that giftedness is something that a child either does or does not possess has been challenged” (Lo & Porath, 2017, p. 350). Such a focus is critiqued because it reflects an understanding of giftedness as an either/or trait rather than a dynamic state based on learning needs in relation to the student’s learning environment (Hymer, 2009; Lupart & Webber, 2012; Porath, 2012). In other words, giftedness has been conventionally considered as a fixed psychometric condition (that awaits proper identification) rather than fluid learning needs that depend on the dynamics between an individual’s developing learning capabilities and a local learning context. Second, the extent to which the gifted label helps in facilitating communication to field practitioners and parents also raises questions (Lo, 2014a; Peters & Matthews, 2016). The label has been critiqued as educationally nondescript and not useful to educators in that it tells them little about students beyond IQ scores (Peters, Kaufman, Matthews, McBee, & McCoach, 2014). Similarly, Jackson (2000) raised the question of whether we should continue labeling and categorizing students or instead design rich environments that emphasize social justice and social equality for the benefit of all children. Along this line of thinking, many scholars have proposed that the gifted label should be attached to programming and services rather than individuals (Borland, 2013; Olszewski-Kubilius & Calvert, 2016). By decoupling giftedness from the either/or reductionist psychometric model, giftedness is increasingly conceptualized as “an inclusive nonnormative guiding framework that seeks out each individual’s unique giftedness and talents, and as a recursive person-in-situation realization that depends on the complexity of a system and the dynamism between an individual and his or her environment” (Lo & Porath, 2017, p. 315).

As described in PSF-GT, the ideology of gifted education is evolving from identifying “smart people” to creating a “smart context” (Barab & Plucker, 2002) that elevates each individual’s giftedness by promoting gifted learning behaviors. The focus of gifted education is in turn shifting from “education for the gifted” (a categorical view) to “education that is gifted” (an inclusive view). This shift closely aligns with the new BC curriculum since the new curriculum highlights inclusive practices that aim to cultivate strengths in each individual. As a result, there is a growing interest in providing an education that allows all students to have rich and varied educational experiences matched to their interests and abilities and a growing opposition to categorizing a special population that would traditionally be served in a gifted program. In this project, the increment of conceptual changes described in PSF-GT will serve as a conceptual metric that helps us reflect on the alignment between contemporary gifted education philosophy and the policy and practices in BC.

**Aims, Objectives, and Research Questions**

This project seeks to better understand and evaluate the policy context of gifted education in BC by examining the epistemic understandings of giftedness and identifying inconsistencies between the current gifted education policy and the new BC curriculum. In addition, since PSF-GT highlights democratic and inclusive practices consistent with the new BC curriculum, the overarching goal of this project is to advance the philosophy, policy, and pedagogy of inclusive education with consideration of gifted students in the newly reformed BC curricular context. Specific objectives of the research project include:

1. construct a historical and archival account of policy design and implementation of gifted education in BC,
2. evaluate the epistemological understanding and theoretical positioning of giftedness as reflected in BC policy texts, administrative guidelines, and associated documents vis-à-vis a metatheoretical framework of giftedness conceptualization (i.e., PSF-GT), and
3. provide insights into how gifted education policies and practices might be reconfigured in the context of BC’s new curriculum.
To achieve these objectives, this project will address research questions that range from descriptive (of the policy history, context, and status quo), to reflective (on the epistemological underpinnings of the policy), to transformative (from current practices).

Descriptive:
1. How were current BC gifted education policies and guidelines developed?
2. How has gifted education policy been perceived and implemented by BC school districts since its inception in 1995?

Reflective:
3. What are the epistemological understandings, values, and ideological assumptions that underlie current BC gifted education policy and practices?
4. How do these epistemological understandings, values, and ideological assumptions intersect with evolving understandings of giftedness outlined in PSF-GT?

Transformative:
5. What are some of the potential opportunities and new directions for reshaping gifted education policy and practices within the new BC curricular context?
6. How could universities (in BC and across Canada) address these opportunities and new directions to revise/update teacher education programs?

Method
In order to develop a critical understanding of BC gifted education policy context, a case study method with a focus on evaluation (Bassey, 1999; Crowe et al., 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McDonough & McDonough, 1997) will be adopted for the study. This approach is well suited to this research project for the following reasons. First, it is designed to generate a rich and in-depth understanding of a complex issue by drawing upon data from multiple sources (Yin, 2009). Second, it focuses on the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and emphasizes detailed contextual analysis (Crowe et al., 2011), which in our case, pertains to the BC gifted education context. Third, it goes beyond descriptive by placing a focus on generating suggestions and solutions (Yin, 2009) for practical issues and professional development (PD) that can improve local services to students with advanced learning needs.

Participants
To fully understand the development and implementation of BC gifted education policies, three distinct policy-related groups will be invited to participate in this study: policy makers, policy linkers, and policy informers (Swanson, 2007). Policy makers are defined as individuals in key provincial leadership positions who develop policies, statutes, and regulations. This group involves ministry-level personnel who are/were responsible for educational policy development. The study will identify two to three ministry-level policy makers for individual interviews. Policy linkers are defined as those who are responsible for policy implementation in school districts and provincial resource programs. This group includes district-level superintendents, associate superintendents, program coordinators, and curriculum consultants associated with gifted education. One policy linker who has some critical understanding of gifted education from each BC school district (60 in total) will be invited to complete an online survey. E-mails will be sent to school superintendents in order to identify a policy linker in each district. In addition, two policy informers (i.e., university professors in the field) who have been involved in the shaping of BC gifted education will be invited for in-depth interviews.

Data Collection
In order to address the diverse nature of our research questions (i.e., descriptive, reflective, and transformative), we will collect research data from broad resources rather than confining data to a specific type (such as interviews). This speaks to Glaser’s (1998) dictum—all is data. All sources of data will be carefully examined and categorized based on their analytical attributes. In this study, data will be collected through the following sources.

Legislative and supplementary documents. This set of data includes publicly available legislative documents such as provincial policies, white papers, and school board guidelines. In addition, it will include potential supplementary documents related to gifted education in BC and the new BC curriculum, such as media releases (e.g., newscasts from newspapers and newsletters), public data sets, school board brochures, school and program handbooks, and web pages of related information.

Online survey. We will design an online survey consisting of questions that address implementation and practices of gifted education in BC. The survey will also solicit participants’ perception of, and feedback on, gifted education policy. This online survey will be administered to policy linkers across BC school districts.

In-depth semistructured interviews. This set of data focuses on collecting information regarding policy-making processes and mechanisms and soliciting insights regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the policy. A semistructured interview questionnaire will be used to interview potential informants, such as policy makers and university professors, who were involved in the shaping of BC gifted education policy in 1995 and 2006. With participants’ permission, the interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

Memos and field notes. Memos and fields notes constitute an important source of data since they can address where a leap of concept occurs and the emergence of analytical themes. This
source of data includes formative comments and feedback from research team members, and memos written down during fieldwork and data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

Data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation will occur simultaneously in this project as they often inform each other in a naturalistic research process (Stake, 1995).

**Computer-assisted analysis.** In order to manage a large volume of qualitative data, this project will adopt computer-assisted analysis. For example, NVivo 12 (QSR International, Melbourne, Australia) will be used for indexing, organizing, and categorizing data. Memos and annotations generated during data analysis will be recorded simultaneously by using Nvivo 12. In addition, we will use MindManager 2018 (Mindjet, San Francisco, CA), Microsoft Visio 2013 (Microsoft, Redmond, WA), and UCINET 6 (Analytic Technologies, MA) to visualize the connections and relations among findings. The visualization tools will also be used for presenting the research findings for dissemination to the public.

**Coding approach.** When coding interview data, the study will follow Glaser’s (1992, 1998) coding scheme that consists of two stages: open coding and selective coding. During the open coding stage, we will stay open-minded and generate as many codes as the interaction between a coder and the data suggests; the initial codes help the research team to determine some core themes and a preliminary interpretive framework. Once an interpretive framework has emerged and has been discussed and consensually agreed upon among the research team members, the coding activities will elevate to the selective coding stage in which the coding becomes more concentrated, focused, and evolves around the core themes (e.g., determine the relationships between codes and themes; determine the properties and nature of a theme). In addition to the coding stages, Glaser’s (1992, 1998) coding scheme categorizes codes based on their nature: codes that describe an incident are called “substantial codes,” whereas codes that denote the relationships between incidents are called “theoretical codes.”

**Critical content analysis.** Critical content analysis (Beach et al., 2009) will be used to evaluate the epistemic understandings of the policy content vis-à-vis the PSF-GT framework. In Krippendorff’s (2003) view, content analysis involves iterative reading of a collective mass of texts that are then interpreted by an analyst and reembodied in new narratives. This is a hermeneutic approach that takes a reader response-oriented research stance. A critical content analysis refers to the analysis where a research uses a framework “to think within, through, and beyond the text” (Beach et al., 2009, p. 130). The inclusive and egalitarian movements addressed in PSF-GT framework will be highlighted as the critical component for content analysis.

**Methodological Rigor**

**Credibility**

Credibility is suggested as “trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and plausibility of the research findings,” and credible reports “are those that readers feel trustworthy enough to act on and make decisions in line with” (Tracy, 2010, pp. 842–843). We aim to achieve a high level of credibility through the following means.

**Qualitative research expertise and competency.** Because the researcher is considered the instrument in qualitative inquiry, it is important to demonstrate the level of the qualitative research expertise and competency a researcher has acquired as part of qualitative research rigor (Patton, 1999). Our research team consists of an expert (the principle investigator [PI]) in gifted education, especially with regard to its philosophical foundation, and an expert (the co-applicant [Co-App]) in curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher PD. Both PI and Co-App have expertise in qualitative research and have published empirical and methodological papers in qualitative research. Graduate research assistants (GRAs) are hired by the following criteria: (1) Their research interests and training are well aligned with the focus and proposed methodology of the project, and (2) they are familiar with the BC education system and/or have worked in the K–12 settings. The GRAs will receive training from the PI and the Co-App to enhance their capabilities in qualitative research skills and quality assurance strategies (refer to the Graduate Student Training and Scholarship Mentorship section).

**Descriptive accuracy.** To paint a true picture of the policy-making procedure that occurred between 1995 and 2006, we aim to render a thick and vivid description of what occurred during the time frame under investigation. We will audio-record and transcribe interviews verbatim and adopt member checks to ensure descriptive accuracy (Lo, 2014a; Maxwell, 2002). The interview participants will each receive a copy of their own interview transcription in order for them to (1) check if there are any inaccuracies in the transcription and (2) make further clarification and/or ask questions if necessary. Once a detailed policy-making procedure has been summarized, the research team will circulate the summary to the interview participants and ask for another round of member checks that affirms and cross-validates the historical/conceptual incidents described in the summary. In the second round of member checks, we will ask for voluntary participation from the interviewees for checking (1) dissonances between the description and their understanding and (2) potential misinterpretations and/or distortions made by the research team.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation is commonly considered to be one of the essential techniques for establishing trustworthy research findings (Carter, Byrant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). It refers to the inclusion of potential triangulating aspects (e.g., methods, data sources, voices) in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of a
phenomenon (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999; Patton, 1999). In our study, we will hone the validity of the results through the following means of triangulation: (1) multiple data collection methods (e.g., online survey, documents, interviews), (2) multiple voices (i.e., policy makers, policy linkers, and policy informers), and (3) multiple perspectives within the research team composition (i.e., professor in gifted education, professor in curriculum development, and GRAs who are also school-teachers and/or parents of gifted individuals).

**Transparency**

Moravcsik (2014) argued that transparency should be regarded as the cornerstone of social sciences since part of research credibility rests on researchers’ efforts to make explicit how the conclusions arise. Along the same line, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that researchers leave an audit trail for readers to engage with and judge the decision-making process that occurred during research design, data collection, and data analysis. We will adopt the following strategies to ensure the “analytic transparency” (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999, p. 377) of the study. (1) Memoing and field notes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967): We will make notes of key insights, leaps of thought, hunches, and questions that arise during data collection and analysis. (2) Peer-debriefing meetings (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2002): The research team will conduct, and make minutes of, peer-debriefing meetings formatively to balance over- and underemphasized points and clarify confusion and vague arguments. (3) Literature integration: We will index the theories and articles searched and read during the study by using Lo’s (2016) three-stage literature integration model that seeks meaningful connections (e.g., consistency, continuity, inconsistency, contradiction) between our research findings and extant field literature.

**Ethical Considerations**

The ethical aspects pertaining to the recruitment of research participants for this project will be examined by the Behavioral Ethics Review Board (BREB) at the University of British Columbia (UBC). During the recruitment stage, we will solicit consent from all participants prior to their active participation in the study. In order to facilitate informed consent for inclusion in the online survey component of the study, an information sheet of the research project will be e-mailed to the potential online survey participants (i.e., one policy linker from each BC school district). Online survey participants will be asked to acknowledge that they have read the information sheet prior to giving their consent to participation. The consent to participate will appear in the first section of the online survey. For policy makers and policy informants, each participant will be provided with an information sheet of the project, a draft of the semistructured interview questionnaire for them to review, and a consent form that indicates whether they agree to participate in the study and whether they feel comfortable with being audio-recorded during the interviews.

Security of participant information will be ensured by (1) erasing the audio recordings once interviews were transcribed and (2) securing all participant information separate from data in a locked office designated to the PI. The data stored in the project computer will be encrypted (i.e., participant identifiers will be removed from transcripts by using initials) and password protected. The access to participant information and data will be restricted to members of the research team. Data collected for the project will be kept for 5 years after the completion of the study before being eradicated. For reporting and disseminating findings of the study, we will ensure the anonymity of the participants and present the results in an aggregate manner (e.g., rural districts vs. urban districts; provincial policy makers vs. university professors) whenever it is possible.

**Graduate Student Training and Scholarship Mentorship**

Student training and scholarship mentorship is a major emphasis of this research project. This project aims to provide graduate students with conceptual, theoretical, practical, and methodological training. Students will develop skills in qualitative research methodology, survey design, collaborative team-based research, conference presentations, and manuscript writing for peer-reviewed journals. The PI and Co-App will interview potential GRAs to ensure that their research interests and training are well aligned with the focus and proposed methodology of the project. The training and mentorship provided by the project can be categorized into project management, research skills, and knowledge mobilization.

**Project Management**

As part of their PD, the lead GRA (doctoral level) will be given opportunities to hone his or her research management and leadership skills. With support and scaffolding from the PI, the lead GRA will be in charge of day-to-day project management (e.g., managing the budget, ensuring compliance with ethical research practices, scheduling team meetings, and monitoring research progress). The lead GRA will receive training from the PI on using MindManager and Microsoft Visio to assist with project management.

**Research Skills**

The project will provide GRAs with ongoing research training through three different stages (Figure 1). In Stage 1, training will focus on research ethics and general research design (methodology and research tools). All GRAs are required to complete relevant research certificates mandated by UBC. Under the PI’s supervision, the lead GRA will be responsible for drafting the BREB application. The PI will also provide training on a three-stage model of literature integration (Lo, 2016) to the GRAs to help them select and synthesize relevant literature. In Stage 2, the magisterial-level GRAs will be trained by the PI in designing and analyzing an online survey and will be responsible for administering the online
survey and collecting survey data. All GRAs will be required to complete two NVivo training sessions on qualitative analysis provided by the UBC Library. All GRAs will be given opportunities to assist in conducting data analysis under the PI and Co-App’s mentorship. In Stage 3, all GRAs will receive training from the PI in using Microsoft Visio (diagramming and vector graphics software) and UCINET (social network analysis software) for visualizing research results in an easily understandable format.

**Significance, Implications, and Dissemination of the Study**

**Significance and Implications**

The findings will support the redesign and formulation of gifted education policy, both in BC and across Canada. It has the potential to foster partnerships between local governments and academia. Furthermore, it will shed light on classroom practices and teacher training programs of gifted education that are consistent with the new BC curriculum. Research findings will be used to revise the gifted education teacher training curriculum offered at UBC and provide PD opportunities to teachers and consultation on gifted education for BC school districts. Research findings will also have implications for other initial teacher education courses since catering to a diversity of students is a key theme in current teacher training. Moreover, this project will extend scholarly literature on gifted education policy and practices, contribute to theoretical and practical foundations of teacher education curriculum development, and elevate the applicability of a metatheoretical framework in gifted education (i.e., PSF-GT) that aims to inform new directions and practices attuned to 21st-century teaching and learning.

**Dissemination of Findings and Contributions to Public Knowledge**

With regard to disseminating our research findings, our tentative activities can be categorized into the following three sectors. A more detailed, realistic, and corresponsive knowledge mobilization plan will be formulated through team meetings in an early stage of the study.

**Scholarly output.** The PI and the Co-App regard conference presentations as an essential part of the professionalization of the trainees (i.e., GRAs) as well as a basis for developing their professional networks. Research findings will be presented to two academic subfields: gifted education and educational policy studies. Regarding gifted education, we will disseminate the findings at national and international conferences, such as the Canadian Society of Studies in Education (CSSE) conference (May 2019) and the National Association of Gifted Children conference (November 2020). Regarding educational policy studies, we will present methodological papers regarding our policy analysis framework and methods at the American Evaluation Association’s annual meeting in 2020. Manuscripts will be prepared for journals read by gifted education stakeholders (such as *Gifted Child Quarterly*) and policy makers and practitioners (such as *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*).
**Community engagement.** We will promote connections and communication between government, academia, and practitioners throughout the research project. Since CSSE will be held locally at the university where the PI and the Co-App work (UBC) in 2019, we will propose a symposium presentation to share preliminary findings (responding to Research Questions 1 and 2) with local and national attendees. Near the end of the research project, we will organize a local policy forum and provide workshops for teachers and school districts in conjunction with local gifted education associations (e.g., Lower Mainland Gifted Contact and Gifted Children’s Association BC) with which the PI is affiliated. The policy forum plenary presentation will be recorded and posted to social media to provoke public interest on the topic. We will present a series of seminars to identify and strengthen ties among UBC scholars and graduate students who share interests in gifted education and/or education policy analysis. In addition, we will initiate collaborations with the BC government after our interview sessions with the ministry-level policy makers.

**Public outreach.** As the first study done in BC, the findings will increase awareness in gifted education communities. Our research team will work on news pieces with education reporters from both national and provincial newspapers to disseminate some of our research findings to the public. To target local teachers, we will work on a newsletter article for the BC Teachers’ Federation newsletter to be published in a January issue in which they typically feature an article on gifted education. We will further make the findings accessible on an UBC blog designed to serve as a key resource index for the province.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**
The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (15R77570).

**ORCID iD**
C. Owen Lo https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8294-9524
Deanna M. Sue https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4633-0211

**References**
Barab, S. A., & Plucker, J. A. (2002). Smart people or smart contexts? Cognition, ability, and talent development in an age of situated approaches to knowing and learning. *Educational Psychologist, 37,* 165–182. doi:10.1207/S15326985EP3703_3
Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings.* Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2006). *Special education services: A manual of policies, procedures and guidelines.* Victoria, Canada: Author.
British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015). *Introduction to British Columbia’s redesigned curriculum.* Victoria, Canada: Author.
Beach, R., Enciso, P., Harste, J., Jenkins, C., Raina, S., Rogers, R., & . . . Yenika-Agbaw, V. (2009). Defining the critical in critical content analysis. In K. M. Leander, D. W. Rowe, D. K. Dickinson, M. K. Hundley, R. T. Jimenez, & V. J. Risko (Eds.), *58th Yearbook of the National Reading Council* (pp. 120–143). Oak Creek, WI: National Reading Conference.

Bee, C. (1998). The GOLD program: A program for gifted learning disabled adolescents. *Roeper Review,* 21, 155–161. doi:10.1080/0278319808953951

Borland, J. H. (2005). Gifted education without gifted children: The case for no conception of giftedness. In R. J. Sternberg & J. E. Davidson (Eds.), *Conceptions of giftedness* (2nd ed., pp. 1–19). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Borland, J. H. (2013). Problematizing gifted education. In C. M. Callahan & H. L. Hertberg-Davis (Eds.), *Fundamentals of gifted education* (pp. 69–80). New York, NY: Routledge.

Carter, N., Byrant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum,* 41, 545–547. doi:10.1188/14.ONF.545-547

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology,* 11, 100–109. doi:10.1186/1471-2288-11-100

Curtcliffe, J. R., & McKenna, H. P. (1999). Establishing the credibility of qualitative research findings: The plot thickens. *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 30, 374–380. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1999.01090.x

Davis, B., Sumara, D., & Luce-Kapler, R. (2015). *Engaging minds: Cultures of education and practices of teaching* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple intelligences: New horizons in theory and practice.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs. forcing.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1998). *Doing grounded theory.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Henry, T. S. (1920). *Classroom problems in the education of gifted children. The nineteenth yearbook of the national society for the study of education (Part II).* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Hollingworth, L. S. (1926). *Gifted children: Their nature and nurture.* New York, NY: MacMillan.

Hymer, B. J. (2009). Beyond compare? Thoughts towards an inclusive, fluid, and nonnormative understanding of giftedness. In T. Balchin, B. Hymer, & D. J. Matthews (Eds.), *The Routledge international companion to gifted education* (pp. 299–307). London, England: Routledge.

Jackson, N. E. (2000). Strategies for modeling the development of giftedness in children. In R. C. Friedman & B. M. shore (Eds.), *Talents unfolding: Cognition and development* (pp. 27–54). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
