Strategic approaches to glocalising curriculum practice: Responding to faculty development needs and circumstances in diverse university contexts

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Abstract

University campuses around the world face significant challenges for engaging culturally diverse faculty and students with responsive programming (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, staff and faculty development programs). Policy documents espousing inclusion and the strategic institutional importance of local and global engagement, for example, are positive steps to foster institutional change. However, in practice, ad-hoc curricula renewal initiatives aimed at facilitating cultural diversity tend to be far less strategic, and with scant attention to research-informed and evidence-based scholarship. This paper attempts to address these complex challenges and provides insights toward a scholarly approach to glocalising curriculum practice for faculty development in multinational settings. In this context, data suggests that strategic institutional supports are key to glocalising curriculum practices. Further, a glocalised curriculum is inherently situated; socially and culturally mediated; and, is responsive to the professional learning needs and circumstances of educational leaders in diverse institutional contexts.

1. Introduction

1.1. Cultural diversity and responsive programming in higher education contexts

University campuses around the world face significant challenges for engaging culturally diverse students with responsive undergraduate and graduate programs. Policy documents espousing inclusion and the strategic institutional importance of local,

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international and global engagement, for example, are positive steps to foster institutional change. In practice, however, ad-hoc curricula renewal initiatives aimed at facilitating cultural diversity tend to be far less strategic, and with scant attention to research-informed and evidence-based scholarship (McLeod & Steinert, 2015; Author, 2012). It is useful to examine meanings attributed to issues of *localization, internationalization* and *globalisation* of curriculum practices within higher education. *Localization* of the curriculum focus on the pedagogical needs and circumstances of the immediate learning environment such as sustaining cultural traditions, identity, heritage, serving regional employment markets, etc. (Swailes, Al Said, & Al Fahdi, 2010). *Internationalization* and *Globalization* of curriculum practice tend to focus on: 1) the pedagogical needs and circumstances of the broader region, international interests, and global environment (e.g., multicultural perspectives, international trends, employment and sustainability), and 2) 21st century global graduate attributes such as transcultural competencies (e.g., critical awareness of local and global issues in their discipline) during their studies (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Badry & Willoughby, 2015; Kreber, 2009). International and global issues thus tend to focus on a wider process transcending borders, focusing on interdependence, and lessening of the influence of individual nation-states. Thus, glocalising a curriculum is an attempt to balance and customize pedagogical emphases on local and global issues pertaining to the subject matter of a course or program. Equally, addressing complex social, political and economic factors within a glocalised curriculum can illustrate critical impacts (e.g., direct, indirect, positive, negative) of local and global issues pertaining to the subject matter of a course or program (Lomar 2018; Mannion, 2015; Patel & Lynch, 2013; Yun & Moskel, 2018). For example, discriminating discourses and practices are highly complex and go beyond nationality as the sole determinant of cultural differences in higher education. For this reason, in developing countries, suggestions have been made for a curriculum that is primarily framed within the local context, but faces outward to the world (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Godwin, 2006; Harrison, 2015). Thus, glocalised curricula acknowledge the impact of internationalisation and localisation on global citizenry, with concerns for local and global sustainability, employability, and the influence of nation-states, regions and intergovernmental organisations on educational policies and practices (John et al, 2017; Jones et al., 2016; Tien, & Talley, 2012). This paper attempts to address these complex challenges and provides insights toward a scholarly approach to glocalising curriculum practice for faculty development in an international research-intensive university context. This initiative is relevant to a wider range of programs, disciplines, and university contexts.

1.2. Glocalising curriculum practice for faculty development

A glocalised curriculum goes far beyond the content of the subject matter under investigation, but is also about the way in which that content is taught (i.e., intercultural

and inclusive), learned and assessed, and how students are supported within these processes. A glocalised curriculum emphasizes a familiarity with the relevant research literature, and focuses on systematic rigorous inquiry; networked improvement communities; symbolic and cultural changes to the normative context that governs academic work; and dissemination of theory and practice in culturally responsive settings (Hubball, Clarke, & Pearson, 2016). Diverse perspectives of a glocalised curriculum are shaped by context-specific frameworks, including cultural (i.e., global, regional), institutional (i.e., university-specific), disciplinary (i.e., signature practices), epistemological (i.e., how we know what we know), and ethical (i.e., confidentiality, professionalism) considerations. In complex university contexts with diverse stakeholders and challenges, and varying levels of support, a glocalised curriculum assists faculty members to meet the diverse (local and international) needs and circumstances for student learning (Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2011). Thus, the importance of a glocalised curriculum in diverse faculty development contexts is compelling, especially when one considers that educational leaders are expected to respond to strategic priorities for program renewal with research-informed and evidence-based practices within and beyond the communities they serve.

In diverse faculty development contexts, we argue that a glocalised curriculum is based on three underlying assumptions about knowledge; (1) it is inherently situated, (2) it is socially and culturally mediated, and (3) it is responsive to the diverse (local and international) needs and circumstances of learners (Hubball, & Gold, 2007). These principles are interconnected and dependent on the unique context to which they are associated. Each assumption provides directions and cautions for curriculum design and pedagogical implementation in diverse university contexts. For example, the first assumption cautions that a glocalised curriculum is inherently situated within disciplinary traditions, learning environments, and political landscapes that frame the particular contexts in which pedagogy takes place. Strategic institutional supports are key to glocalising curriculum practices on university campuses. Thus, a scholarly approach to a glocalised curriculum must have regard for the historical, political, and contextual factors that characterize curricula and pedagogical practices within those contexts. In short, a glocalised curriculum and context are inextricably linked and determine each other in significant ways. Honouring the situated nature of knowledge is, therefore, a recognition that a glocalised curriculum exists within broader communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Shulman, 2005).

The socially and culturally mediated dimension of knowledge construction speaks to the importance of arriving at a shared understanding and values of a glocalised curriculum that are pivotal in fostering intercultural education, and how it might be implemented within the context of the institutional/professional/disciplinary context (Gay, 2000; Houston & Lebeau, 2006). For example, facilitating cultural pluralism and acknowledging cultural influences on the ways in which learners construct and generate

knowledge (Bygrave, Asik-Dizdar, & Saini, 2014; Roehl, Reddy-Linga, Kucko & Prestwood, 2013). Coming to a shared understanding of values and beliefs requires open dialogue and active participation by key stakeholder representatives. The co-constructed knowledge that arises from such engagement is essential to implementing a glocalised curriculum that upholds and honours knowledge as being always complex and dynamic.

Finally, conceptions of 'responsiveness' of a glocalised curriculum (e.g., sustained engagement, learning outcomes) will always be part of how it is designed and taught within complex university contexts (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Therefore, curriculum leaders need to make explicit their own assumptions, beliefs, and intentions about a glocalised curriculum as a first step to an authentic, inclusive, and a productive conversation about pedagogical practices (Lawrie et al, 2017). In sum, these three interconnected characteristics of knowledge construction are essential for glocalising curriculum practice for effective faculty development in diverse university contexts. The following iterative framework has been adapted for professional development initiatives in diverse higher education settings (Burt & Hubball, 2014; Hubball, Clarke, Webb, & Johnson, 2015; Hubball, Clarke, Chng, & Grimmett, 2015).
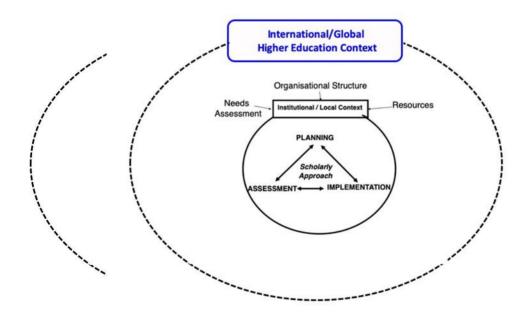

Figure 1. A framework to enhance a strategic approach to glocalising curriculum practice in diverse higher education contexts.

Centred on inquiry, this framework takes into account diverse ontological, epistemological, and ethical considerations. It invites program leaders to draw upon appropriate context-specific frameworks to enhance planning (e.g., local and global-level professional learning outcomes), implementation (e.g., technology-enabled local and

global professional learning experiences) and assessment (e.g., indicators/evidence of local and global professional learning) of glocalised curriculum practices in diverse higher education settings. Very little research has examined strategic approaches to glocalisation of curriculum practices for enhancing faculty development in diverse university contexts. For the purpose of this study, the following research question was designed to guide this investigation in the *University of British Columbia International Program for the Scholarship of Educational Leadership* (UBC SoEL Program) context: *What are strategic ways to enhance glocalisation of curriculum practices for faculty development programs in diverse university settings?*

Integral to the primary research question are the following sub-questions (SQs):

SQ1. What contextual factors influence the glocalisation of curriculum practices for faculty development in the international SoEL Program at UBC?

SQ2. What are current best practices pertaining to glocalisation of curriculum practices for faculty development in the international SoEL Program at UBC?

SQ3. What are strategic institutional and/or Faculty-specific supports to enhance glocalisation of curriculum practices for faculty development in the international SoEL Program at UBC?

2. Methodology

2.1. Appreciative inquiry

In order to gather evidence for the above research questions, appreciative inquiry (AI) research methodology was employed to gather relevant data over a ten-month period from May 2016 to February 2017. AI is a distinctive form of practice-based research methodology with an explicit transformational agenda for strategic visioning to systematically enhance and sustain organizational initiatives (Breslow, Crowell, Francis, & Stephen, 2015). The fundamental principles for AI suggest that the inquiry should begin with appreciation, should be collaborative, and should be applicable. AI begins with the identification of positive attributes and then connects those attributes with the community's vision and action for change (Cockell & MacArthur-Blair, 2012). Thus, AI research methodology is highly generative in nature and consists of a 4-D cycle of phases: discovery, dream, destiny and design. For example, AI research methodology places emphases on strategically engaging curriculum stakeholder representatives (key personnel at the host institutions, administrators, curriculum leaders, faculty, and field-based instructors) in a networked improvement community around inquiry in order to gather relevant contextually bound data pertaining to each research question.

2.2. Data collection

Integral to AI methodology, a purposeful sample of contextually-bound data sources were accessed to gather evidence for the research questions:

- E.g., Relevant documentation from UBC strategic planning documentation (Place & Promise, 2010; Strategic Plan 2018-2028);

- E.g., Program materials from program participants; manuscripts from program participants, which were published in local contexts;

- E.g., Samples of best practices from UBC SoEL Program course syllabi materials; participant course evaluation documents review and analysis regarding educational best practices among faculty members;

- E.g., Focus groups with Institutional academic leaders and UBC SoEL Program advisory board;

- E.g., Reflective field notes from the researchers pertaining to SoEL and the UBC SoEL Program. Researchers included the former Program Chair for the ZU Interior Design Undergraduate Program; and the instructional team of the *University of British Columbia (UBC) International Program for the Scholarship of Educational Leadership*.

The analytical phases were focused around the affirmative topic and its sub-questions and followed the 4-D cycle:

- Discovery: appreciating, valuing the best of what is in the organization; strengths, best practices, and peak experiences.

- Dream: envisioning what the ideal future might be, and what the organization may look like in its fullest level of potential.

- Design: dialoguing what should be, synthesizing and discussing dreams and positive core attributes and deciding about the desired changes moving forward.

- Destiny or delivery: innovating what will be and it is all about making it happen or implementing desired changes. All the interviews were recorded to identify themes for further analysis.

Qualitative data sources were analyzed using the constant comparative method through categorization, and finally to thematisation (Coe, Waring, & Hedges 2017; Friedman, 2008). Next, member checking was utilized to establish major themes, data patterns, and to discern complex interactions, contradictions, and improvements to enhance curriculum integration practices. The use of iterative and multiple data sources established the trustworthiness of the research findings through triangulation.

3. Results

3.1. SQ1. What contextual factors influence the glocalisation of curriculum practices for faculty development in the international SoEL Program at UBC?

Multiple institutional factors have influenced the glocalisation of curriculum practice for faculty development in the international SoEL Program at UBC. For example, UBC is routinely ranked among the top 20-30 universities in the world and is among the top three universities in Canada (Times Higher Education, 2018).

> *The University builds on successes in international teaching, learning, research, and service to increased engagement at every level* (Place and Promise, 2010)

The University's Place and Promise 2018-2028 strategic visioning document professes a commitment to both International and Community Engagement, with the goal to strengthen UBC's presence as a globally influential university:

> *UBC is locally integrated and globally connected. Indeed, global perspective is embedded in the histories and communities that have shaped the local context in British Columbia and at UBC. The balance of Canadian perspective and geographic diversity across our student population is critically important. UBCs global networks open new vistas for research and education, and they enable UBC to help mobilize positive change across the world. Strengthened engagement requires an outward orientation and enhanced accessibility for partners, as well as structures and processes to support reciprocity and co-ordination. It also demands the capacity to listen and adapt to the evolving needs and dynamics of the world beyond the university.*

UBC educates a student population of 50,000, including 16,188 international students from 156 countries, and employs 16, 089 faculty and staff. It offers over 250 graduate degree programs through sixteen Faculties, eighteen Schools, and two Colleges. Among the current or former faculty, there are thirteen 3M National Teaching Fellows (see http://www.ubc.ca/). Institutional level learning outcomes, for example, include local, international and global objectives:

> *Through collaboration, at home and abroad, we will help students, faculty and staff broaden their perspectives, learn from peers and colleagues around the globe, and contribute to a shared positive impact* (UBC Strategic Plan, 2018).

Located in UBCs Faculty of Education, the *International Program for the Scholarship of Educational Leadership* (SoEL Program) is a customized faculty development program for multidisciplinary educational leaders at UBC and faculty members at partner

universities around the world. This cutting-edge program focuses on the scholarship of teaching, learning and educational leadership within and across UBCs diverse disciplines, as well as customized program offerings in complex oversees university contexts (including Australasia, China, Europe, North America, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, West Indies) (http://international.educ.ubc.ca/soel). For example, program participants examine research-informed and evidence-based approaches to the strategic development, implementation and impact assessment of undergraduate and graduate degree programmes in diverse higher education contexts. Thus, in order to engage complex issues of cultural diversity and responsive programming, glocalising curriculum practice in these diverse educational leadership contexts is key for effective engagement of academic learners.

3.2. SQ2. What are current best practices pertaining to glocalisation of curriculum practices for faculty development in the international SoEL Program at UBC?

Data revealed a wide range of best practices, centred around responsive curriculum design and inclusive pedagogies, for effectively glocalising the curriculum in UBCs international SoEL Program.

3.2.1. Responsive curriculum design. Drawing on the heuristic framework (Figure 1), institutional-level and cohort member needs assessment data with key stakeholder representatives (including strategic visioning documentation, Curriculum Vitaes, survey questionnaire submissions, online video conference recordings) were used to guide the customised design of glocalised curriculum practices. Needs assessment data revealed institutional and discipline-specific strategic planning goals; political structures; promotion, tenure, and re-appointment criteria; and available resources (aligned leadership expertise, adequate IT support, and financial support) for customised professional development. Furthermore, university cohort members were situated in diverse disciplinary and cultural contexts, with equally diverse institutional roles (e.g., Associate Provost, Dean, Associate Dean, National and Institutional Teaching Fellows, Program Leaders, Directors, Associate Directors, faculty member nominees) and foci for SoEL inquiry projects. For example, strategic practice-based SoEL inquiries focused on organizational (e.g., fostering an institutional culture for educational scholarship within and across multidisciplinary contexts), programmatic (e.g., innovative graduate program development, program-level outcomes assessment and curricula integration) or pedagogical leadership (effective faculty development, flexible learning, evaluation of teaching) practices. Thus, to ground SoEL inquiry projects within the scholarly literature (and encourage dissemination in peer-reviewed fora), cohort-specific data reinforced previous program experiences and the need to include participants' access to a wide

range of relevant institutional, regional and international resources. Flexible learning methodologies are employed including synchronous and asynchronous program scheduling and access to a wide range of on-line program resources (e.g., thematic journal articles, podcasts, keynote lecture video recordings, select examples of exemplary SoEL portfolios drawn from cohort members in multiple countries) as part of a comprehensive program Learning Management System (LMS). For example, in this context, practical strategies for glocalising curricula included: involving local and international scholars and visiting experts; encouraging local and international faculty mobility and collaboration opportunities; using local, international or intercultural case studies; and developing integrated programs with local and international partners. This variety of supports ensures that the program learning experience is responsive to the diverse needs and circumstances of multinational educational leaders.

3.2.2 Inclusive pedagogy. Since SoEL involves facilitating networked communities of practice that are grounded in inquiry, the program is designed, in part, around a blended cohort model. Within this cohort model, emphasis is placed on collaboration and peer review (often pairing local and international cohort members) as an integral part of UBCs international SoEL Program. In order to effectively balance situated, collaborative, and independent professional learning experiences for multinational educational leaders, technology-enabled pedagogies were central to program delivery. Moreover, this provided educational leaders with a unique forum to debate scholarship practices (including the plurality of ontological, epistemological, ethical and dissemination perspectives for SoEL), and evaluate philosophies, issues, and applications of SoEL from diverse perspectives in higher education. For example, all participants were invited to an individual prior learning orientation meeting (via Skype call in international venues) in April, prior to the May 1st program start, to discuss the program and to help cohort members define their SoEL inquiry goals, as well as preparation for early access to the LMS and comprehensive on-line program resources. Depending on the individualized prior learning orientation meetings, multinational educational leaders followed a personal learning plan and engaged in approximately 150 hours of professional learning experiences over a 4-month period.

Inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian & Linklater, 2010) included strategically coordinated monthly video-conference/in-person meetings (i.e., appropriately scheduled and coordinated synchronous scheduling for diverse regional time zones and professional responsibilities). Consistent with 'flipped classroom' methodologies, cohort program meetings primarily focused on problematizing SoEL Theory-practice contexts and SoEL inquiry presentations in complex higher education settings. Authentic assessment and evaluation of SoEL is an integral (formative and

summative) component of UBCs international SoEL Program. Three methods, incorporating formative and summative assessment processes were employed included instructor feedback, self-assessment reflection, and peer review. Furthermore, graduates were required to complete an external peer review based on their SoEL ePortfolio. The trained external peer review team includes former program graduates who are multinational Teaching Fellows and institutional teaching award recipients with recognized records of accomplishment in institution-level educational leadership, teaching excellence, and higher education scholarship. To summarize, data suggest that effective glocalised curriculum practices for faculty development in UBCs international SoEL Program include responsive curriculum design and inclusive pedagogy.

3.3. SQ3. What are strategic institutional and/or Faculty-specific supports to enhance glocalisation of curriculum practices for faculty development in the international SoEL Program at UBC?

Data from institutional documents suggest that regional, national, and/or professional accreditation agencies in many regions of the world are working more closely than ever with universities to anchor their activities in the needs of institutional priorities to better support and enhance educational practices, leadership, and scholarship. At the institutional-level, data suggest that universities around the world are busily engaged in significant educational reform activities with mixed success regarding implementation (e.g., budget allocations reflecting institutional priorities, leadership expertise for research informed and evidence-based educational practices). For example, many universities, fueled by strategic recruitment and the rapid growth of international student enrollment, undergoing significant educational reforms have developed mission statements with explicit commitments to celebrating campus diversity, and facilitating community and international engagements. In conjunction, some universities are reconsidering strategically aligned criteria for merit, tenure, and promotion; differential workload priorities for campus-wide and Faculty-specific educational leaders; and customized faculty development and leadership programs that are increasingly rooted in the scholarship of teaching, learning and educational leadership. For example, at two of the authors' university, under Article 4.03 of UBC's Collective Agreement and the definition of "Scholarly Activity", the scholarship of teaching and professional contributions ranks equally with traditional scholarly research. Criteria for the scholarship of teaching, for example, are evidenced by factors such as originality or innovation, demonstrable impact in a particular field or discipline, peer reviews of scholarly contributions to teaching, dissemination in the public domain, or substantial and sustained use by others. Similarly, criteria for professional contributions can include evidence that might be viewed as demonstrating leadership, rare expertise, or

outstanding stature expected in a professional contribution. Furthermore, the criteria for educational leadership in the Professor of Teaching rank can be evidenced by leadership taken at UBC and elsewhere to: advance innovation and excellence in teaching; contribute to curriculum development and renewal within the unit/Faculty; engage in scholarly teaching with impact within and outside the unit; and application of and contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning (Sections 3.1.6 to 3.2.6; 3.4.1; 4.4 Senior Appointment Committee Guidelines, 2018).

Key to strategic institutional support structures, and aligned with strategic visioning documents and collective agreement contracts, are customized and adequately resourced (including leadership expertise, budget allocation) professional development programs designed to meet the diverse educational needs and circumstances of the institutional context. Professional development is therefore a key enabling factor for the glocalisation of curriculum practices. For example, on our own university, the UBC SoEL Program has been developed and implemented annually since 1998 in order to meet the diverse educational needs and circumstances of multidisciplinary educational leaders at UBC and faculty members in partner universities around the world. This program is administered through UBC's Faculty of Education, and is led by senior Professors, scholars, and National Teaching Fellows with a track record of higher education scholarship, in local and international settings. Essentially, the UBC SoEL Program focuses on the scholarship of teaching, learning, and educational leadership (including strategic development, implementation and impact assessment of undergraduate and graduate degree programs) within and across UBC's diverse disciplines, as well as customized program offerings in complex oversees university contexts. For each program cohort, for example, a member of the UBC SoEL Program leadership team engages in an interactive participant needs assessment, as well as combines on-site visits with video conference meetings, in order to better understand unique individual, disciplinary, and institutional needs and circumstances. Data from partner universities and multinational SoEL cohorts revealed, however, that most research institutions do not have senior academics within Faculties or Colleges of Education who provide active leadership and educational inquiry contributions regarding the scholarship of teaching, learning, and educational leadership on their campuses.

4. Key challenges and cautionary lessons for facilitating cultural diversity through the glocalisation of curriculum practice

While there are encouraging signs of progress toward support for glocalising curriculum practices in diverse higher education settings, data suggest that a myriad of related challenges exist on university campuses. These include a lack of resources (e.g., financial, supporting literature, specific curriculum leadership expertise); institutional

criteria for tenure and promotion that poorly align with strategic visioning documents; and a lack of collaborative program design, poor attention to participant needs assessment data, and inadequate co-teaching methods with location-specific disciplinary and/or institutional faculty development leaders [i.e., localized cultural alignment]. Several respondents commented that frequent and significant changes in senior administration on their campuses created continual uncertainty about the importance given toward strategic initiatives (including curriculum renewal). Others raised concerns about the extent to which institutional budget allocations reflected strategic curriculum renewal priorities. On our own campus, for example, changes in Senior Administration and substantial funding priorities allocated toward strategic implementation of educational technologies and its support has been a noticeable shift from previous educational development initiatives, such as strategic curriculum renewal (including glocalising curriculum practices). Exacerbated by already heavy academic workloads, educational leadership efforts to engage systematically in glocalised curriculum practices are often constrained. Thus, even under supportive institutional conditions, it was far from easy for many educational leaders to engage in glocalised curriculum practices. These findings reinforce that glocalised curriculum practice is shaped by many factors and is impacted by people at various institutional levels (e.g., administrators, curriculum and pedagogical leaders, instructors, and learners) in complex university settings. Not surprisingly, therefore, glocalising curriculum practices have enormous potential for most institutions but also poses significant organizational challenges regarding strategic alignment of educational leadership and scholarship priorities.

5. Conclusions

On a global scale, institutional educational leaders face significant challenges to facilitate cultural diversity on university campuses around the world. Glocalisation of curriculum practices, in part, can enhance the facilitation of cultural diversity through the enactment of localised, internationalised, and globalised learning experiences. This article highlights a scholarly approach, as well as the critical interdependence of institutional governance and higher education reforms, to enhance glocalised curriculum practices. For example, we have provided a theoretical framework for glocalised curriculum practices, as well as practical examples for its strategic use and support drawn from our professional learning experiences with academics in Canada and multi-national settings. Although programmatic examples are still works-in-progress, significant developments and commitments to glocalising curricular practices have been made. Preliminary findings from this pilot study in the international SoEL Program at UBC indicate that strategic institutional supports (e.g., visioning documents, criteria for tenure, promotion and re-appointment, customized professional development) are key to glocalising curriculum practices. Further, a glocalised curriculum is inherently situated; socially and culturally mediated; and, is responsive to the professional learning needs

and circumstances of educational leaders in diverse institutional contexts. While there are still many challenges and areas for improvement in the international SoEL Program at UBC, an institutional commitment to the scholarship of teaching, learning, and educational leadership can be the basis for facilitating glocalised curriculum practices in higher education. Further studies are required to examine the impact of glocalised curriculum practices within and across the disciplines in undergraduate and graduate degree program contexts.

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