

Chapter 7:

Driving Innovation and Excellence in Distance Education Practice through Practitioner Enquiry

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Introduction

In the general education landscape, Practitioner Enquiry has been well established as a valuable investigative tool that allows education practitioners or groups of practitioners to gain insight into the efficacy of current individual or group practices while simultaneously developing a deep awareness of areas of possible remediation and their associated developmental targets. Practitioner Enquiry could provide crucial insight into personal and communal distance learning methods through critical reflection within the application of personal practice or as a member of a working group. These insights can then be used to drive initiatives for the promotion of teaching and learning innovation that will in turn enrich the distance education student's experience. In addition, the learnings resulting from Practitioner Enquiry can be used to inform the development of systematic and cyclical professional development programmes that will ensure practitioners remain agile when faced with disruptions in their practice.

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Essentially, the ultimate goal of Practitioner Enquiry, as applied within the context of distance education, is to promote growth and renewal in distant learning practices, as well as in the processes and policies that support them, at both the levels of the individual practitioner and the community of practice. As such, this chapter was designed to help the distance education practitioner answer one fundamental question: How can I make learning within the sphere of distance education better for my students, my community of practice, and myself? In other words, how can I positively impact student engagement and learning, promote my own professional development and those of practitioners in my community, and establish initiatives that will influence and sustain progressive ways of thinking about distance learning practice?

In this chapter, we will first investigate the nature and rationale of Professional Enquiry as a

research and investigative strategy within the context of distance education. Then we discuss the criteria and practical procedures for incorporating it into daily personal reflective practices and formal departmental, faculty, and even institutional research projects.

To create a clear distinction between the two main applications of Practitioner Enquiry and to subsequently aid our attempts to circumscribe these two areas of application, we will respectively refer to *Personal Reflective Enquiry* and *Group Practitioner Enquiry* within this chapter.

What is practitioner enquiry and why is it relevant to distance education?

Practitioner Enquiry, also referred to as Practitioner-based Enquiry, gained recognition in the early 1990s as an investigative methodology focusing on the systematic reflection on the process of teaching and learning as facilitated by an individual practitioner or group of practitioners. Murray (1992: 191) describes the initial iteration of Practitioner Enquiry as a process in which educators 'systematically reflect on their own institutional practices, in order to produce assessable reports and artefacts' which were collected for the purposes of achieving credits towards professional qualifications awarded by bodies that regulate education practices in the higher education sector. While the initial aim of Practitioner Enquiry was to promote the formal professional development of educators, it also represented a shift from conventional education research which was conducted in 'predetermined institutional contexts, to a corpus of concerns that confront the educational practitioner in his daily educational life.' The original aim of Practitioner Enquiry, which encapsulated both Personal Reflective Enquiry and Group Practitioner Enquiry from the beginning, was to establish the principle that the professional experience of educators represents in and of itself a valid resource for the evaluation of education practices through the application of structured reflection. Murray (1992) describes the nature of Practitioner Enquiry as a deliberate and systematic reflection—that is, a blend of self-consultation, recapitulation, and self-criticism—on a recurrent instructional practice or challenge. What is further implied by this observation is that Practitioner Enquiry does not refer to a clearly delineated or pre-defined research methodology, but rather a particular research focus and strategy that can be supported by any number of appropriate methodologies utilised in the collecting and analysing of data relating to a particular 'educator experience'. Within the context of our current discussion, for instance, Practitioner Enquiry can be used by the distance educator to systematically reflect on their experiences whilst performing their

multi-faceted duties as distance education practitioners.

While Practitioner Enquiry was first introduced as a structured and systematic approach to in-service training for educators in the United Kingdom during the early 1990s, its contemporary application retains the original intent—that is, the continuous improvement of educational practices through in-service reflection—albeit now vastly expanded and diversified in scope. Saubert and Ziguras (2020: 3) observe that even though contemporary Practitioner Enquiry is applied in research endeavours that range from those focusing on specific educational systems (technologies, applications, platforms, etc.) or aspects thereof, to those focused on generalised educational practices and conditions, there are common elements that characterise these endeavours regardless of context. According to Saubert and Ziguras (2020: 3), research of this nature is:

- ‘Applied and transformative’—Enquiries are typically focussed on real-world challenges that, when resolved, will lead to the transformation of an individual practitioner, group of practitioners, or organisation.
- ‘Systematic’—The research is often applied to a particular pre-defined problem within a multi-faceted context. To fully probe the problem, and by implication gain the ability to formulate a suitable heterogeneous solution, the researcher must systematically review the relevant literature and contextual aspects of the problem and fully appreciate its complexity.
- ‘Engaged’—This refers to the dualistic role of the researcher as both observer and subject, that is, those engaged in a particular practice often also lead the investigation into this practice.
- ‘Shared’—The intention is often to produce data that can inform development and improvement initiatives that exceed a single application or transcend the context of the individual practitioner. The findings of these initiatives are often shared among members of a community of practice for purposes of improving an education system or battery of practices.

Wolkenhauer (2017: 4) summarises the above by explaining that in Practitioner Enquiry educators perform systematic reflections and ‘take action for change by asking questions or “wonderings,” gathering data to explore their wonderings, analysing the data, making changes in practice based on knowledge constructed, and sharing learning with others’. Through this process, which aims to superimpose theory on practice and vice versa, teachers are empowered to direct their own professional development and the contributions they make to their communities of practice. Also, seeing that the ‘wonderings’ of practitioners—a concept akin to a ‘hunch’ or a ‘gut-feeling’—results from their daily engagement with students, the focus of Practitioner Enquiry generally results in

focused and direct enhancement of the student experience and the subsequent performance of students. The rationale here is that the investigation and resulting remediation are based on what the practitioner believes or 'knows' is lacking in their practice, or micro context, and not themes or trends that permeate meso (department or faculty) or macro contexts (national or global). The likelihood, however, is always there that areas for development identified in the micro context of an individual practitioner will hold direct relevance for practitioners on the meso and macro level, and therefore the aspect of sharing remains fundamental to the process of Practitioner Enquiry.

Wall (2018) adds that there are two main standpoints in Practitioner Enquiry: first, as 'an epistemological stance'—that is, a way of understanding the world which in turn gives educators an informed voice that supports the improvement of outcomes for students through an enhanced understanding of the 'teaching and learning interplay in their context' by enacting and evaluating change as part of communities of practice; second, as a 'project' or a 'strategic finding out, a shared process of investigation that can be explained or defended'. It is the latter standpoint that legitimises Practitioner Enquiry as a formalised research endeavour with the ability to provide insights into key areas of practice. From the perspective of the project, Wolkenhauer (2017: 2) warns that there are several barriers to the establishment and maintenance of effective enquiry-based investigation across various academic modules in higher education programmes, which include the 'lack of resources, support, and understanding'. Despite these challenges, however, Practitioner Enquiry that is well integrated with the planning and practice of teaching will help, particularly those new to teaching, to transition from a purely subjective experience of teaching (that is, as students 'receiving' education) to a balanced view that allows for movement between a subjective and objective observation of teaching practice.

Even though distance education represents only a minor, albeit rapidly growing, sub-field of general education practice, the role of a practitioner in this field is incredibly diverse and encompasses a vast array of skills and techniques, as well as the mastery of various complex technologies and systems. Therefore, to effectively reflect on such a multi-faceted practice, the utilisation of a singular research methodology would prove ineffectual. It is for this reason that we refer to Practitioner Enquiry as a research strategy or process, rather than a methodology. By broadening the scope of Practitioner Enquiry beyond that of a single and narrow avenue of enquiry, the individual practitioner or research leader is empowered to select the most suitable homogeneous or heterogeneous research methodology to effectively address the area of study and its related study questions. It is the very selection and formulation of these research questions that mark the most observable departure of Practitioner Enquiry from general education research

as the focus is shifted from topics related to theory and policy to those that focus on grass-roots level issues encountered by practitioners as they go about their daily tasks.

In the next section, we'll look at typical question types used in both Personal Reflective Enquiry and Group Practitioner Enquiry.

Getting started with personal reflective enquiry: What do I want to know?

The first step for the individual practitioner seeking to improve on personal practice is to determine exactly which part of their practice requires investigation and what kind of knowledge they wish to gain from this endeavour. Simply put, we could start by asking: (1) What do I want to know about the nature and effect of my distance education practice?; and (2) What do I want to know about my teaching techniques, use of technologies, or how I apply pedagogical principles in a distance learning environment? Often, we may approach the formulation of questions or the selection of topics and focus areas with pre-conceived notions or 'hunches' of where there may be areas of our practice that are underperforming and in need of further development. These 'hunches' may not be based on any formal evidence, such as programme or course reviews, assessment data, student engagement records, or even performance appraisals and productivity monitoring. Based on our personal experiences, we may have specific questions in mind (*Does my personal practice effectively promote the integration of technology, pedagogy, and subject knowledge?*), seek to explore broad areas such as effective online course page design, the promotion of student engagement with asynchronous learning resources, or aim to improve a particular area of practice such as assessment design or online tuition support.

While Personal Reflective Enquiry as a means of engaging with the 'work' of distance education could be applied as narrowly or broadly as suits the practitioner's needs, in general, the process primarily entails 'questioning and looking for answers as part of a general professional commitment to keeping up to date with new developments' (Wall 2018: 4). As such, questions are typically formulated to identify shortcomings in relation to current practices, emerging practices, or established best practices. This is particularly true in the context of a field such as distance education practice that is simultaneously destabilised by disruption (technological, socioeconomic, and otherwise) and the resulting practices that respond to it, and stabilised by established educational practices and principles that stood the test of time.

Does Distance Education in the Developing Context Need More Research? Building Practice into Theory

Here follows a list of example questions that could provide initial guidance for distance educators who are new to the process of Personal Reflective Enquiry:

- i. What would the purpose of Practitioner enquiry in my space be?
- ii. Do I want to improve/change something specific in my practice as a distance educator?
- iii. Have my students expressed dissatisfaction about any aspect of my practice?
- iv. Have academic quality assurance initiatives identified areas in my practice that could potentially contribute negatively to student performance, experience, and engagement?
- v. Are all my students happy?
- vi. Are all my student performing as I expect them to?
- vii. Do I have a clear view of what full mastery of my practice would look like as a distance educator?
- viii. In my own opinion, how do I currently fall short of my ideal picture of full mastery of my practice?
- ix. In the view of my superiors and peers, how do I currently fall short of their ideal picture of full mastery of my practice?
- x. Can I identify clear areas of development for myself?

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It should be emphasised here that while the questions above provide an ideal departure point, practitioners have to be 'flexible in asking questions about their practice' and need to be able to change their teaching according to the changing nature of the students they have in front of them from one teaching cycle to the next

Get going with group practitioner enquiry: What do we want to know?

While the general practice of Practitioner Enquiry accommodates for both Personal Reflective Enquiry and Group Practitioner Enquiry, which are very distinct in nature albeit aimed at reaching the same objectives, it should be noted that the two practices are not mutually exclusive and that the learning from personal practice often influences or initiates group enquiries. This *domino effect* was particularly observable during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic lock-down

restrictions which forced many education institutions to rapidly migrate their delivery models into online environments or at least adapt them to the established conventions of distance education. Overnight, institutions had to implement a repositioning of education practices and disciplines which effectively translated into the immediate elevation of distance education methodologies to the position of primary approach regarding the delivery of teaching and learning, while previously it was a secondary or marginalised approach. This means that where distance educators traditionally had to adapt established face-to-face approaches (residential contact models) to their work, within distance education and particularly online learning applications, the reverse was now required as contact lecturers had to learn the 'language' of distance and online education very rapidly. This, of course, posed an enormous challenge to new and established educators during the initial stages of *Emergency Remote Teaching* which simply aimed to apply contact-based education using online conferencing and collaboration technologies, such as MS Teams, Zoom, and Skype. Challenges relating to the adoption of distance education methodologies and the technologies and systems that support them further intensified as institutions migrated into hybrid education models that sought to add and incorporate the functionalities of learning management systems (LMS) when it became clear that engaging students in synchronous sessions for prolonged periods was not conducive to learning, and that asynchronous components facilitating self-guided study were required. This created a situation where those individuals in faculties and departments that had prior experience in distance education practices had to take on the role of a *mage* (a person who has magic powers: here in the sense of someone who unfolds the intricacies of distance education for novices) for educators that did not have this experience. At the time of writing, nearly two years following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions are still struggling to facilitate the wholesale adoption of effective distance education practices across all faculties, departments, and individual practitioners. It is in this present scenario where we believe the practice of Group Practitioner Enquiry could make a valuable contribution to the establishment, and continuous improvement and adaptation of professional development initiatives that could rapidly upskill practitioners and promote their continued growth as practitioners in the distance education milieu. It is important, however, to always ensure that enquiry initiatives remain aligned to the professional standards of the institution to ensure wherever the practitioner is in their personal journey of professional development that there is a continued expectation that they will enquire into their practice and therefore positively impact the learning experience of their students.

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Wolkenhauer (2017: 1) further expounded on the value of this approach and explained that 'the position teachers and others who work together in inquiry communities take toward knowledge

and its relationships to practice', will in time provide a grounding within changing cultures and institutional reform. Wall (2018: 7), however, warns that if 'practitioner enquiry research is going to become more widespread and be the basis of collaborative professional learning, providing shared language and bringing professional communities together in productive dialogue, we have to develop a better understanding of what this term 'research' encompasses'. If the 'research' of Practitioner Enquiry relates to a 'finding-out or investigation with a rational approach that can be explained and defended' that results in findings that can be shared so it becomes more than reflection, or Personal Reflective Enquiry, then what is it we want to find out as distance educators? What are the questions we want to ask and the knowledge we want to acquire or produce and share?

While there obviously cannot be an exhaustive or generic list of questions that can shape the focus of Group Practitioner Enquiries in communities of practice everywhere, the following may present a departure point for groups of distance education practitioners working within the current context:

- i. What would be the purpose of Practitioner enquiry in our group?
- ii. Do we want to improve/change something specific in our collective practices as articulated in current practice guidelines, standards, policies, procedures, etc.?
- iii. Have students in groups/cohorts/classes assigned to our department, faculty, or institution directly or indirectly expressed dissatisfaction about any aspect of our distance education practices?
- iv. Have academic quality assurance initiatives identified areas in our distance education practices that could potentially contribute negatively to student performance, experience, and engagement?
- v. Are our students happy?
- vi. When we consider the assessment performance, throughput, and engagement as expressed in quality assurance reporting, are we satisfied that students are performing as we expect them to? Is there a specific area (performance, throughput, or engagement) that is underperforming?
- vii. Do we have a clear view of what full mastery of distance education practice would look like in the educators who form part of our group?
- viii. Is there agreement between members of our group on areas in which we

- currently fall short of the ideal picture of full mastery of distance education practice? Is there a consensus on priority areas for development?
- ix. In the view of institutional (executive) management, are the collective practices of our group aligned with the strategic vision and mission of the institution?

Below are additional thematic questions that were formulated to address current trends and challenges faced by education institutions:

- i. How do we apply the established principles of effective User-experience Design (UX) within the design of distance education systems and platforms, learning materials, courseware, lesson planning, and learning activities to facilitate an ideal Student Experience (SX) that optimises learning and engagement? Are there any areas of our current UX design that may be resulting in sub-optimal student engagement and performance (SX)?
- ii. Are our students fluent in the language of distance and online education? Are we able to distinguish between a state where our students can actively engage with online resources and learning activities but derive little meaning from it (literacy), and a state where students can analyze and evaluate online resources as part of a process of forming deep meaning (literacy)?

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The process of personal reflective enquiry

One of the main strategies for the management and promotion of Personal Professional Enquiry, as well as for the integration of its principles in one's daily work, is to be found in journaling. A journal, within the context of our current discussion, is effectively 'an account of the process of problem formulation, derivation of a research methodology or enquiry strategy, and orderly reflection on the practice' (Murray 1992: 193). It should be understood, however, that journaling here does not refer to the description or diarisation of chronological events, but rather to a process through which the 'problematic nature of educational enquiry is rendered intelligible, first to self, and subsequently to significant others' (Murray 1992: 193). In this way the journal becomes both the product and source of enquiry as it provides a means to reflect on a problem, identify a suitable avenue of enquiry or

research methodology, but also becomes an artefact or representation of the problem. To clarify, the process of Professional Enquiry entails the development of strategies for the investigation and analysis of observed phenomena in personal practice, the actual execution of these strategies, and then the recording of findings and the continuous reflection on the entire process. The process is therefore cyclical and requires the practitioner to regularly return to journaling in an attempt to establish and promote an internal dialogue and critical reflection on all the elements of a typical quality assurance cycle:

- Phase 1—Identification of focus area within a battery of practices. This includes the formulation of the research question and the selection of suitable research methodologies.
- Phase 2—Process findings and formulate a response. Once you know what the problem is or you have identified what the developmental area in your practice is, you need to formulate a response (an action or actions) to correct it.
- Phase 3—Execute your strategy for the resolution of the problem and monitor its efficacy.
- Phase 4—Reflect on your observations and share them within your community of practice.

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While it aids our understanding of the process to break it up in this manner, these phases should not be looked at as disparate actions with defined starting and stopping points, but rather as shifts in your view as you continuously observe and critically reflect on your own practice in a cyclical manner. The process may be illustrated as follows:

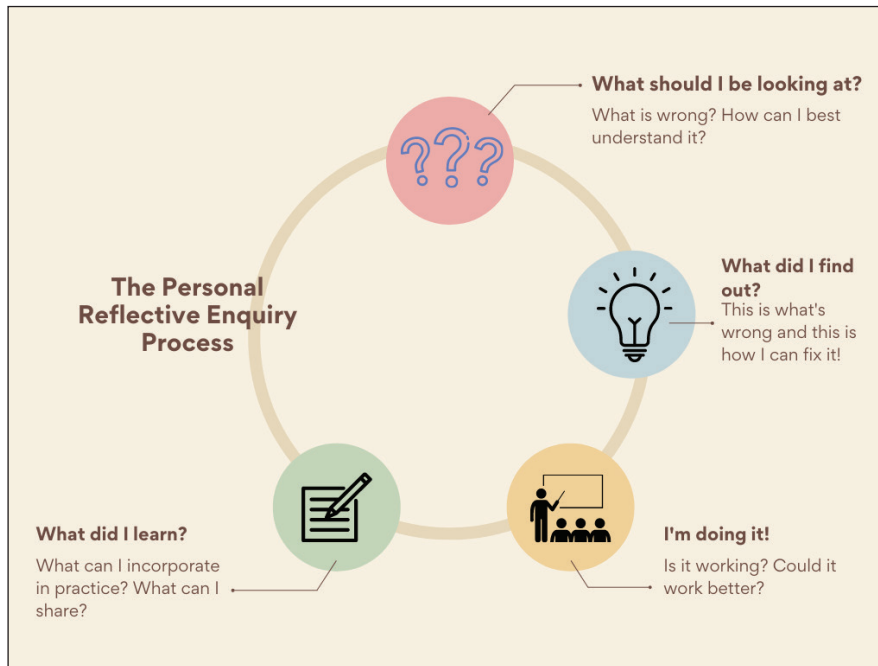


Figure 1: The Personal Reflective Enquiry Process

Mirroring the traditional quality assurance cycle, this cyclical approach to Personal Reflective Enquiry that encompasses both the recording of progress whilst simultaneously driving progress is by no means a new or novel concept or, as stated in St Maurice (1996: 108), ‘cyclical ideas of progress are as old as recorded literature, religion or philosophy, and as new as contemporary cosmology’. St Maurice (1996: 108) further supports the value of cyclical reflection in educational action research by stating:

In cyclical ideas of progress, present events are best treated as aids to reflection upon their contexts and contingencies. The main educational implication of such ideas of progress is that critical reflection is not a means to an end but an end in itself, the best possible outcome for human thought or deed.

Here, St Maurice (1996) points out a critical distinction between Personal Reflective Enquiry and Group Practitioner enquiry, as in the former the process of continuous reflection is both the means and the end of practitioner enquiry, while this is not the case in the latter as will be explained in the next section.

A Practical Approach to Group Practitioner Enquiry

Instead of pouring over assessment data or any other data that can be drawn from the institutional quality management system for purposes of identifying potential questions to steer enquiries that would get us started on our journey towards *making learning better* and producing *happy and engaged students*, Baumfield et al. (2012) suggest that we begin by considering the ‘stone’ in our shoe—that is, the ‘things’ in the context of our personal practice that persistently bothers us. As discussed earlier, Personal Reflective Enquiry typically leads to Group Practitioner Enquiries when the individual shares reflections that are found to be relevant to the larger group or community of practice, so carefully considering the *stone in one’s own shoe* is a valuable first step. Once you have the stone under eye, so to speak, one could use the following statements as partially adapted from Baumfield et al. (2012) as points of departure:

- i. I want to make this aspect of my practice better ...
- ii. I want to change X, because I believe it will result in Y.
- iii. I am worried about X or I don’t fully understand Y.
- iv. Some students are unhappy about this aspect of their experience ...
- v. I want to find out more about X.
- vi. I would like to implement X to see what happens.
- vii. I’m confident that if I start doing X, it will improve on Y.
- viii. X (technology, teaching strategy, etc.) is new in my field of practice; I need to upskill myself in its use.

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The following figure, partially adapted from Baumfield et al. (2012), serves to illustrate the process to turn a departure statement into an Enquiry question:

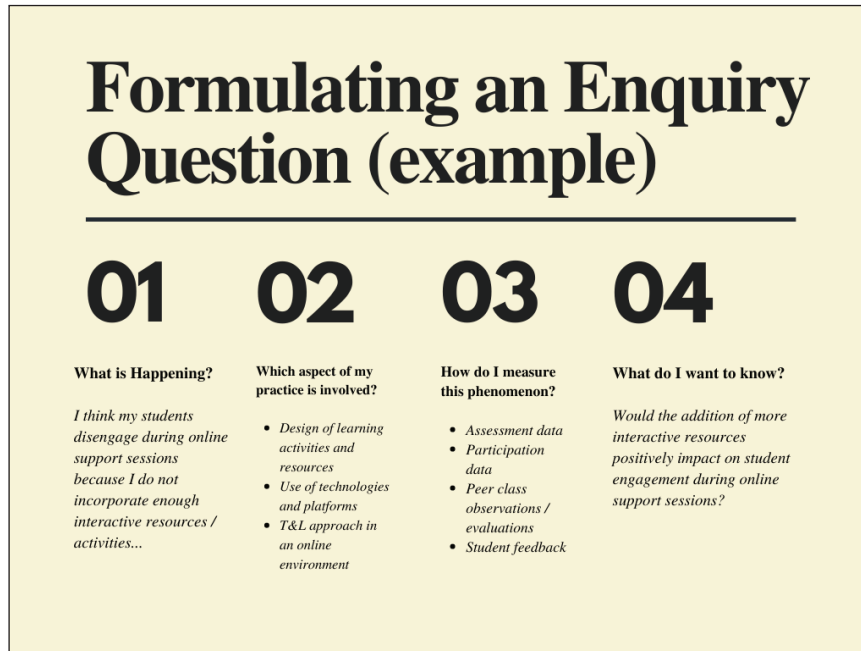


Figure 2: Formulating an Enquiry Question (Example)

When turning these statements into questions, we also need to consider if the questions are in fact answerable and manageable as some questions may best be addressed through, for instance, programme impact studies or large-scale studies on student behavior. During the process of formulating a question, it is also important to conduct a preliminary literary review on the underlying topic to ensure that you develop a core understanding of the related theories and terminologies, and to have discussions with colleagues and peers to gain a better understanding of the broader context and related research initiatives that may already be underway.

Once you've decided on a question or area of enquiry, the next logical step is to recruit members from your group to actively participate in the research and the dissemination of findings to the rest of the group or community. While resourcing and funding restrictions often force study leaders to reduce their criteria for the selection of members to 'those that are willing to participate and not those that are ideally positioned to make a contribution', Saubert and Ziguras (2020) suggest that, where possible, we should actively seek out participants that have knowledge in the area of

study and are well versed in the selected research methodology, proficient in academic writing, recognised in the area of study as an authority or at least a knowledgeable practitioner, and have the capacity to fulfil required duties in the research team. In the process of recruiting participants, you may need to further refine your initial questions as potential participants may not be immediately convinced of their relevance in the context of the current body of practices and related student experiences or may not believe they could facilitate a unique contribution to the current dialogue or body of knowledge.

From here we move on to research design. As stated earlier, Practitioner Enquiry does not represent a defined system of enquiry or a battery of prescribed research methodologies, and therefore a discussion relating to all possible aspects of research design that may be considered for Practitioner Enquiry initiatives is outside the scope of this chapter. We will, however, provide here a series of questions, as adapted from Baumfield et al. (2012), that will aid you in selecting appropriate research methodologies and constructing a research design that will produce the data needed to address your enquiry:

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- i. What kind of data will most likely provide us with the answers we're looking for? Qualitative Data (recorded focus group discussions, transcribed interviews, open-response questionnaires, etc.) or Quantitative data (number-based data such as assessment statistics, surveys using Likert scale responses, etc.)? Simply put, your decision here is based on whether you want to know the 'what' (objective evidence of a phenomenon and how it develops and changes) or the 'why' (possible explanations for an observed phenomenon provided by students, colleagues, or other respondents). In cases where both the 'what' and 'why' (the observation of the phenomena and possible explanations for it) are required, mixed- or multi-method methodologies may also be utilised.
- ii. What kind of evidence will most likely record the phenomena: interviews, questionnaires, and observations (traditional methods); participation records, assessment scores, and behaviour logs (data available to all institutions); samples of student work and observations of students participating in activities (observations of regular online Teaching and Learning activities such as webinars, discussion forums, etc.); and observations of activities purposefully designed to produce specific evidence for research purposes?

- iii. Regarding decisions pertaining to research design and strategy, which entail all aspects of the research project, related planning, and timelines, Baumfield et al. (2012) advise that the result of your decisions (data collections tools, period of evaluation, types of respondents, etc.) must always link back to your enquiry question, be constantly rationalised, and enable to the achievement of your research goals. Simply put, what you put in must result in the improvement of the particular aspect of a practice or the student experience you set out to improve as a group of practitioners.

One of the key benefits of applying Practitioner Enquiry to distance education practices is that there is much more data available on the student experience than there is in a contact-education context. The reason for this is that distance education, especially online education, is primarily systems driven and as such could potentially record and track far more aspects of student engagement than would be possible in a traditional face-to-face environment. Where the contact educator only has access to records on what is visible to them and recorded by them (assessment scores, class attendance, behavioural records, etc.), the distance educator potentially has access to a vast array of data sets that capture every nuance of the student's engagement with, for instance, an LMS. For example, most LMS platforms would record how long a student spends on a particular course page, and all the elements contained therein (activities, text-based resources, peer engagement, media, etc.), which would help the educator determine if disengagement is caused by the quality of resources or perhaps by the usability of the platform or the structure of the course page. 'Heatmapping' software could even provide educators with insight on which areas from a layout perspective are more frequented by others and therefore can help course designers to more effectively position important resources. While the data now available to the contemporary distance education practitioner and their communities are vast, readily accessible, customisable, and presented in formats that make for easy analysis, it could create a situation of 'information overload' which may result in a muddled research design. The key here is to fix the study on particular aims and only select data and data-gathering techniques that directly align with those aims. Ironically, while we are now able to get a far better picture of the student experience through the addition of a multitude of data-gathering points in the student life cycle, we need to isolate aspects thereof, and only consult data related to those aspects to be able to make focused and incremental improvements to our practices.

Conclusion

While this chapter did not seek to provide an exhaustive discussion on all matters relating to Practitioner Enquiry and its various iterations, applications, and associated research methodologies, it did aim to provide enough grounding for individuals and groups of distance education practitioners to start looking inward in a structured way as they seek to positively impact the experiences of their students. As such, Practitioner Enquiry could complement, supplement, or even replace formal quality assurance initiatives within education structures that, for instance, aim to determine the impact of a programme, the performance of a group of students, or the professional appraisal of educator performance, as it is focused on the here-and-now and its findings have a direct impact on the short-, medium- and, long-term student experience at the grass-roots level.

Since its formal introduction in the broader schooling system of the United Kingdom in the early 1990s, the value of Practitioner Enquiry among traditional institutional research endeavours and professional educator development initiatives has been well established, but it is in its promotion of reflection on personal practice where its value truly lies. Gilchrist (2018: page number needed) supports this notion by explaining:

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We should view practitioner enquiry as a verb, rather than a noun. It is not another of the many 'things' we are asked, or choose, to do in school. In its purest form, it is a way of being, a disposition, a way of thinking, reflected in a series of actions that are embedded as an approach in our professional practice and identity.

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