# Chapter 17
# Old Dogs, New Tricks:
## Self Study of Online Instruction

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Initiated quietly at isolated institutions across the U.S. during the mid-1990s, online instruction is now extremely popular and academically accepted at most universities, even in teacher education, where many instructors adhere to the adage that "teachers of teachers should model the models" through historically traditional face-to-face instruction. As instructors of all ages and in all stages expand their practices to include online instruction, assessing one's self efficacy is both critical and beneficial. To embark upon a comprehensive analysis, self assessment of one's self efficacy must be conducted within the multiple contexts of teaching, learning, schooling, and the educational enterprise.*

*Gallavan's Critical Components and Multiple Contexts of Self Assessment Model provides the structure for monitoring one's instructional efficacy coupled with guidelines for monitoring growth and pursuing appropriate professional development. Through the action research methodology of self study, the author conducted an extensive self assessment of her self efficacy as a seasoned teacher educator (one of many old dogs) analyzing her change processes as she expanded her repertoire to include online instruction (the new tricks). Reporting her findings based on the author's emerging MIND over Matter framework, the outcomes of this study provide useful implications for the author and all instructors engaged in both face-to-face and online instruction.*

## BACKGROUND: GETTING TO KNOW ME

As a seasoned educator with 35 years in classrooms (20 years in elementary and middle level schools and 15 years in higher education), I have experienced many changes related to living and learning associated with technology. During my childhood in the sixties, I was taught how to type on a manual typewriter. I used a dial telephone attached to a wall that connected me to a party line, and I watched television programs available

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on only three networks in real time that were controlled by walking across the room, changing the channels, and adjusting the antenna.

These tools matched the technology available in the schools. Information was located in libraries using card catalogs; movies were shown from reel-to-reel projectors; filmstrips were viewed using DuKane projectors; and, on rare occasions, educational programs were broadcast from the local television station exposing studies to isolated lessons in foreign language instruction.

Fast forward through the decades and today we find elementary school and middle level students learning how to keyboard and use computers to locate information, record documents, and advance a multitude of academic skills. It seems as if everyone has a cell telephone and all electronic devices have remote controls. In classrooms, instruction is delivered using computers wired to the Internet, electronic visual projectors, computer based PowerPoint presentations, electronic white boards, and so forth. Additionally, instruction is delivered electronically online via a variety of programs and platforms modifying teaching, learning, and schooling in ways that were never imagined when I began my career as an educator.

## "OLD DOGS:" A SELF-STUDY INVESTIGATING MY EXPERIENCES WITH ONLINE INSTRUCTION

Online instruction in higher education began quietly at isolated institutions scattered across the U.S. during the mid-1990s. Within ten years, most institutions of higher education were offering some courses via online instruction, and today it is one of the most popular and fastest growing student services available at colleges and universities (Allen & Seamon, 2007, 2008). Concomitantly, online instruction is increasing in academic acceptance by instructors as an equally viable form of education in preparing students for graduate programs and professional careers at institutions that are fully engaged with distance education (Allen & Seamon, 2007, 2008). Even teacher educators who adhere to the adage that "teachers of teachers should model the models" through historically traditional face-to-face instruction are overcoming their apprehension and resistance by offering online instruction (Kirtman, 2009; Sobel, Iceman-Sands & Dunlap, 2009).

Like many other seasoned teacher educators in higher education, I observed the arrival of online instruction as a potential option experiencing both captivation and caution. Having encountered many changes throughout my career that have impacted my instruction, the advent of online instruction prompted me to question the essential elements of education and their relationships to my self efficacy. My immediate concerns focused on the quality of online instruction (Bourne & Moore, 2004) related to my teaching, the students' learning, the specific courses within our programs, and the mission of becoming a teacher (Tallent-Runnels, Thomas, Cooper, et al., 2006).

This chapter documents my 15-year progression with online instruction through the methodology of self study. My experiences are chronicled following Gallavan's Critical Components and Multiple Contexts of Self Assessment Model and reported as four distinct phases of my progression. The findings of this study result in the emerging formulation of the MIND over Matter framework applicable to individuals involved with all aspects of face-to-face and/or online instruction.

### Reviewing Self Efficacy and Self Assessment

Every conscientious instructor continuously reviews the development of his or her own sense of self efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Shaughnessy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). In higher education, instructors receive feedback regularly from administrators, colleagues, and students. However, only by conducting structured and comprehensive self