

TITLE: Evaluating Effectiveness of Various Physical Activity Instructor Recertification Modalities

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Program Developers, Evaluators, and Extension

ABSTRACT: Background: Better Bones and Balance® (BBB) is a fall-risk reduction physical activity program for older adults. Program implementation is supported via an annual instructor certification course, and triennial recertification requirement. To satisfy the recertification requirement, annual recertification trainings were provided in-person from 2013-2019 and adapted for online delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Purpose: Our aim was to compare the effectiveness of in-person and online recertification training approaches. Methods: Trainings were provided in-person from 2013-2019, via a hybrid online with live Zoom session in 2020, and via an asynchronous online course in 2021. Seventy instructors recertified across all modalities (37 in-person, 15 hybrid, 18 asynchronous) and completed a post-training survey assessing knowledge and confidence to deliver BBB. To compare the effectiveness between training approaches, survey scores were compared using the Kruskal-Wallis test to account for non-normally distributed data. Results: Trainees exhibited high knowledge and confidence (mean scores ranging from 3.3-3.8 on a 4-point Likert scale) and no difference in scores between training groups ($p=0.35$). Conclusion: An asynchronous online training is as effective as an in-person training in facilitating high instructor knowledge and confidence in delivering BBB classes. The implications for practice include expanded reach at a reduced cost.

OBJECTIVE(S): Explain the difference between in-person and online training approaches for Better Bones & Balance®. Describe differences in training outcomes between in-person and online approaches. Discuss the role of Extension in promoting physical activity for older adult populations
