

Comparison Table Narrative Evaluation Element

Methodology

1. What was the focus of the evaluation?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLCs: The evaluation included a sample of 21st CCLCs and focused on project implementation, participant outcomes, and efforts made by grantees to sustain funding.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The evaluation included every TASC center established during the organization's first two years of operation that continued to operate as TASC sites.

2. What was the evaluation design?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The national evaluation of 21st CCLCs consisted of two separate studies - one for elementary school centers, and the other for middle school centers. The study of elementary school centers was a random assignment (or experimental) design that consisted of a participant group and a non-participant control group. Middle school centers were evaluated using a quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group. Participants were evaluated against demographically similar non-participants. Baseline data was collected after participants enrolled in the 21st CCLC center and may have caused the evaluation to miss early effects of participation.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The evaluation of TASC centers used a quasi-experimental design with a comparison group consisting of all students attending the host schools who did not enroll in the TASC after-school program. A comparison of participants and nonparticipants in terms of prior levels of academic achievement and demographic characteristics showed the two groups were comparable. The design was implemented uniformly: every center evaluated was subjected to the same study design, irrespective of the grade, school, or enrollment patterns. Baseline data, for participants and nonparticipants, was collected from the year prior to enrollment in the TASC after-school program. This enabled the evaluation to capture early effects of participation.

3. What was the time period measured?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: In its entirety, the analyses will encompass 2 consecutive academic years. Thus far, the evaluation has published findings based on a single year of data collection: 2000-01. Data for 2001-02 has been collected, and findings are slated to be released in Winter 2003.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Upon completion, the evaluation will consist of 5 consecutive years of data collection and analysis. Thus far, the evaluation has collected, analyzed, and published 3 years of findings: 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01. Analysis of 2001-02 data will be completed and released in 2004. An analysis of survey data and program enrollment and attendance data collected from 26 TASC-sponsored 21st CCLCs (which represents all TASC 21st CCLCs operating during the 2001-02 school year) will be released in Summer 2003. In addition, test score data for 2001-02 for these 26 sites will be collected, analyzed, and released at a later date.

4. How many program centers were evaluated?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation collected data from a total of 80 centers: 18 elementary and 62 middle school centers.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Every TASC center established during the organization's first 2 years of operation was evaluated - 104 centers in total, of which 69 served only elementary students, 14 served only middle level students, 12 served a combination of elementary and middle school students, 5 were high school centers, and 4 served a nontraditional combination of grades (e.g. K-12).

5. What proportion of all 21stCCLCs and TASC centers did the National Evaluation of the 21st CCLC's and Evaluation of the TASC After-School Program evaluations represent, respectively?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation report does not clearly document the number of centers nationwide. However, the report indicated there were 1,560 grantees nationwide, and that each typically operated 3 to 4 centers. Given this information the number of centers nationally, and the proportion represented by the centers sampled was approximated: $1,560 \times 3.5 = 5,460$ centers nationwide; $80 \text{ centers sampled} / 5,460 = 1.5\%$

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The evaluation sample includes all centers established during TASC's first two years of operation.

6. How many students were in the evaluation sample?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The study of elementary school centers randomly assigned 587 students to participate (study group). The study group's small size presents statistical problems which are not discussed in the report; mainly that it is less likely to be representative of the study's universe (all elementary 21st CCLCs), and that its analysis produces a sizeable margin of error. As a result, the study's findings may not be generalized to all elementary 21st CCLCs. The evaluation of middle school centers included 1,782 participants.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Data was collected from the NYC Department of Education for every student who ever enrolled in one of the 104 TASC-sponsored centers evaluated, for a total of 46,020 participants.

7. How many students were in the control/comparison group?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The study of elementary school centers randomly assigned 381 students to the non-participant control group. The evaluation of middle school centers matched participants with 2,482 similar non-participating students. The report does not clearly indicate if the non-participating students that comprised the comparison group were selected from the same schools as their participating counterparts. In addition, the report does not clearly explain how or if the evaluation controlled for student mobility or "crossing over". That is, if a student included in the comparison group began to participate mid-year was he/she removed from the comparison group and treated as a participant, or was this student excluded from the analysis. In the middle school study, how was the other member of the matched pair of students treated in the analysis?

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The evaluation of elementary and middle school centers compared participant outcomes to the outcomes of 68,867 nonparticipating students enrolled in TASC host schools. The evaluation controlled for "crossing over" by treating these students as participants, as well as duration and intensity of participation.

8. Were the evaluation and control/comparison groups demographically similar?

Mathematica’s Study of the 21st CCLC’s: For both the elementary and middle school studies, the report indicates that the evaluation and control/comparison groups were statistically different on a variety of measures, including gender, ethnicity, and household income. Moreover, the evaluation of elementary school centers was not able to collect information for all the members of either the treatment or control groups, which resulted in sample sizes that fluctuated depending on the variable. The report does not explain what impact these missing students or data had on the demographic make-up of the control/treatment groups. The comparison group for the evaluation of middle school centers did not represent the study’s participants. Statistical models were created to adjust for the differences among middle school center groups. However, the relative success/failure of this approach was not clear.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The sample of elementary and middle school center participants was demographically similar to non-participants.

9. Was the sample of centers representative of the study’s universe?

Mathematica’s Study of the 21st CCLC’s: The sample of middle school centers evaluated resembled the demographic composition of the study’s universe (all middle school 21st CCLCs nationwide). However, the elementary school centers evaluated did not represent the demographic make-up of all elementary 21st CCLCs nationwide. The table below illustrates the relationship between sample centers and centers nationwide for key demographic measures.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The evaluation sample included every TASC center established during the organization’s first two years. Therefore, both the elementary and middle school centers evaluated were representative of the study’s universe (TASC).

10. How did researchers collect data?

Mathematica’s Study of the 21st CCLC’s: The study of elementary school centers drew upon student, parent, and teacher surveys, reading test scores (SAT-9), school records, center and school staff surveys, and program attendance records. The study of middle school centers drew upon student, parent, and teacher surveys, school records, center and school staff surveys, and program attendance records.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The evaluation of both elementary and middle school centers drew upon student, parent (years 1 and 2 only), and principal surveys, standardized test scores in reading and math, school records, center coordinator and staff surveys, and program enrollment and attendance records. In addition, data was collected on center structures, activities, staffing, and expenditures. The evaluation team also conducted site visits to a sample of centers, which included interviews with the center coordinator and principal, focus groups of school day teachers, center staff, and students, and structured observations of program activities.

<h2>Program Description</h2>

11. How many hours per week did centers typically operate?

Mathematica’s Study of the 21st CCLC’s: Centers operated 10 or more hours per week. Thirty percent of the centers operated 20 or more hours per week, and some had Saturday, holiday, and summer hours.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Centers operated 5 days a week, 3 hours per day, 15 hours per week, for 36 weeks.

12. Were there participation requirements?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The centers did not have participation requirements. The evaluation noted that many of the centers operated as drop-in centers.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Continuous participation (5 days/week, 15 hours/week, for 36 weeks) is expected from enrollees.

13. What were the average daily attendance rates within centers?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation did not delineate enrollment by center in their report. However, it did report that, nationally, each grantee served approximately 700 students per year across 3 to 4 centers. The number of students served per center was estimated as follows: $700 / 3.5 = 200$. The report described typical elementary and middle school centers, noting that on an average day 80 elementary and 60 middle school participants attended their respective centers. Drawing on this information, an average daily attendance rate was estimated as follows: $80 / 200 = 40\%$ for elementary school centers; $60 / 200 = 30\%$ for middle school centers.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Elementary school centers on average enrolled 261 participants and had a 78% average daily attendance rate; middle school centers enrolled an average of 242 students with a 57% attendance rate. Combined elementary/middle school centers enrolled an average of 256 students and had a 77% average attendance rate.

14. What were the average yearly attendance rates among participants?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation report indicated that elementary school participants attended 58 and middle school participants 32 days of programming, respectively.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Participants in elementary school centers attended an average of 94 days, participants in middle school centers attended 63 days on average, and participants in combined elementary/middle centers attended an average of 88 days of programming.

15. How large were the centers?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation report did not delineate per-center enrollments. However, it was noted that each grantee served 700 students each, across 3 to 4 centers. Drawing on this information, the number of students enrolled per-center was estimated to be $700 / 3.5$, or 200.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Overall, centers enrolled an average of 258 students. Elementary school centers on average enrolled 261 participants; middle school centers enrolled an average of 242 students, and combined elementary/middle school centers enrolled an average of 256 students.

16. How were the centers staffed?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The average staff-to-student ratio was 1 to 11. However, this was a point of some confusion since the report also indicated that homework help typically consisted of a 1:20 ratio for elementary and 1:15 for middle school centers. Typically, assistant principals and teachers were employed part-time to serve as program directors, and school day teachers comprised 60% of program staff.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: The staff to student ratio is typically 1 to 10. A fulltime year round, salaried, program director hired by the sponsoring community-based organization oversees center-level operations. Nearly a quarter of program staff (24%) was teachers, classroom aides, instructional assistants, and other regular school day staff. Centers also employed a mix of CBO staff, subcontracted staff (i.e. artists, dancers, musicians, etc), college students, parents, and volunteers.

17. What activities and services were provided?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: Elementary schools: 90% to 100% of centers offered academic enrichment, including homework help and test prep. All also offered recreation activities - such as art, drama, karate, and leadership. Middle schools: 90% to 100% of centers offered homework help. More than 75% of centers also offered recreation and cultural activities.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: All sites provide homework help. 90% to 100% of sites provide recreational reading, math games/activities, word games/activities, and organized reading activities. In addition, 100% of sites offered arts projects, and most sites offered physical and social development activities. 35% of centers reported using an externally developed curriculum, e.g. Foundations, Inc. Literacy, Pablo Python, Habitat Ecology Learning program, Putumayo World Cultural Music, Violence Prevention, Conflict Resolution, Earth Science developed by the New York Botanical Gardens, science-based curriculum developed by the American Museum of Natural History, and science curriculum developed by the New York Hall of Science.

18. What did the programs cost?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: \$1,000 per participant - the cost of staff training was not delineated.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: \$1,500 per participant - includes \$125 per student for staff training, professional development, and technical assistance sessions.

Participant Outcomes

19. Did participants demonstrate a statistically significant rise in school day attendance?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: Elementary school participants did not show a statistically significant increase in school day attendance relative to the control group students. Middle school participants showed slightly higher school day attendance rates relative to non-participating students in the matched comparison group.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Elementary student participants who attended at least 60 program days and 60% of the time showed increased school attendance to a greater extent than their non-participating counterparts. Depending on grade level and duration of participation, the school attendance of middle school participants either declined less compared to that of nonparticipants, or increased while the school attendance of nonparticipants decreased. This is particularly noteworthy, since other research has shown that school attendance steadily decreases each year between the 5th and 8th grades, nationwide.

20. Did participants demonstrate statistically significant improvements on standardized test scores in Math?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation did not track standardized test scores in math for elementary or middle school participants.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Standardized test scores in math were tracked for both elementary and middle school students. For both elementary and middle school students, participants at greatest risk made the largest math gains, and gains were evident for low achieving active participants irrespective of their number of years of participation. Active participants (those students that attended at least 60 days and 60% of the time) showed gains in math after 2 and 3 years of participation. Moreover, math gains were evident for particular subgroups (Special Ed, ELL, African American, and Hispanic students).

21. Did participants demonstrate statistically significant improvements on standardized test scores in Reading?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: There were no statistically significant differences between the standard test scores in reading of elementary school participants and non-participants. The evaluation did not track standardized test scores in reading for middle school participants.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Test scores were tracked for both elementary and middle school students. There were no statistically significant differences between the standard test scores in reading of participants and those of non-participants.

22. Did participants demonstrate a statistically significant reduction in mobility?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation did not track standardized test scores in math for elementary or middle school participants.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Using student data from the NYC Department of Education, the evaluation analyzed student mobility by tracking the rate at which participants and non-participants transferred schools. Student mobility dropped considerably after one year of TASC participation. The mobility rate decreased from 23%, during the two years prior to enrolling, to 14% after one year of TASC participation. By contrast, 22% of all non-participants transferred out of their schools during the same year.

23. Did participants demonstrate statistically significant improvements in social development?

Mathematica's Study of the 21st CCLC's: The evaluation found no effects on classroom and peer interaction. The study concluded that in some cases, there was an increase in some negative behaviors - e.g. delinquent activities.

Evaluation of the TASC After-School Initiative: Elementary and middle school participants reported high levels of academic self-esteem, positive peer relations, exposure to new experiences, and mastery of performance skills. Middle level students also reported that participation helped them to develop life and leadership skills. Principals reported that participation enhanced students' motivation to learn and their attitudes toward school, and that the after-school project increased parents' sense of school safety.