

# Shaping Social Skills in Context: Social Fitness Club

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## Introduction

Social competence is essential to the development of social relationships. Additionally, limited social competence results in increased rates of school failure and adult psychopathology.<sup>6, 4</sup> The skills associated with social competence, referred to here as social skills, can be taught<sup>2</sup> and also rely on context. One such context is in a fitness environment. Social Fitness Club (SFC) is an experimental, contextually-dependent social skills and fitness group for adolescents that aims to increase positive social skills and improve self-efficacy.

## Materials and Methods

### Methods

- Referred participants (aged 12-17) completed eight 90-minute social skills and fitness training sessions
- Participants and teachers completed measures before and after completion of SFC
- Pre-post changes were examined with effect sizes ( $d$ ) and 95% confidence intervals

### Curriculum Outline

Session #	Topic	Details
1	Introduction	Group expectations and positive noticing
2	Paying Attention	Noticing verbal and nonverbal cues
3	Communication	Listening, giving feedback, and being a partner
4	Being a Teammate	Working hard with others and noticing your environment
5	Leading a Team	Taking charge of a team
6	Competition	Being a good winner, not a sore loser
7	Managing Conflict	Negotiating common conflicts on teams
8	Setting goals	Setting personal, social, and fitness goals

### Measures Used

- Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)<sup>3</sup>
- Test of Adolescent Social Skill Knowledge (TASSK)<sup>5</sup>
- Self-Efficacy for Social Situations Scale<sup>1</sup>

## Results

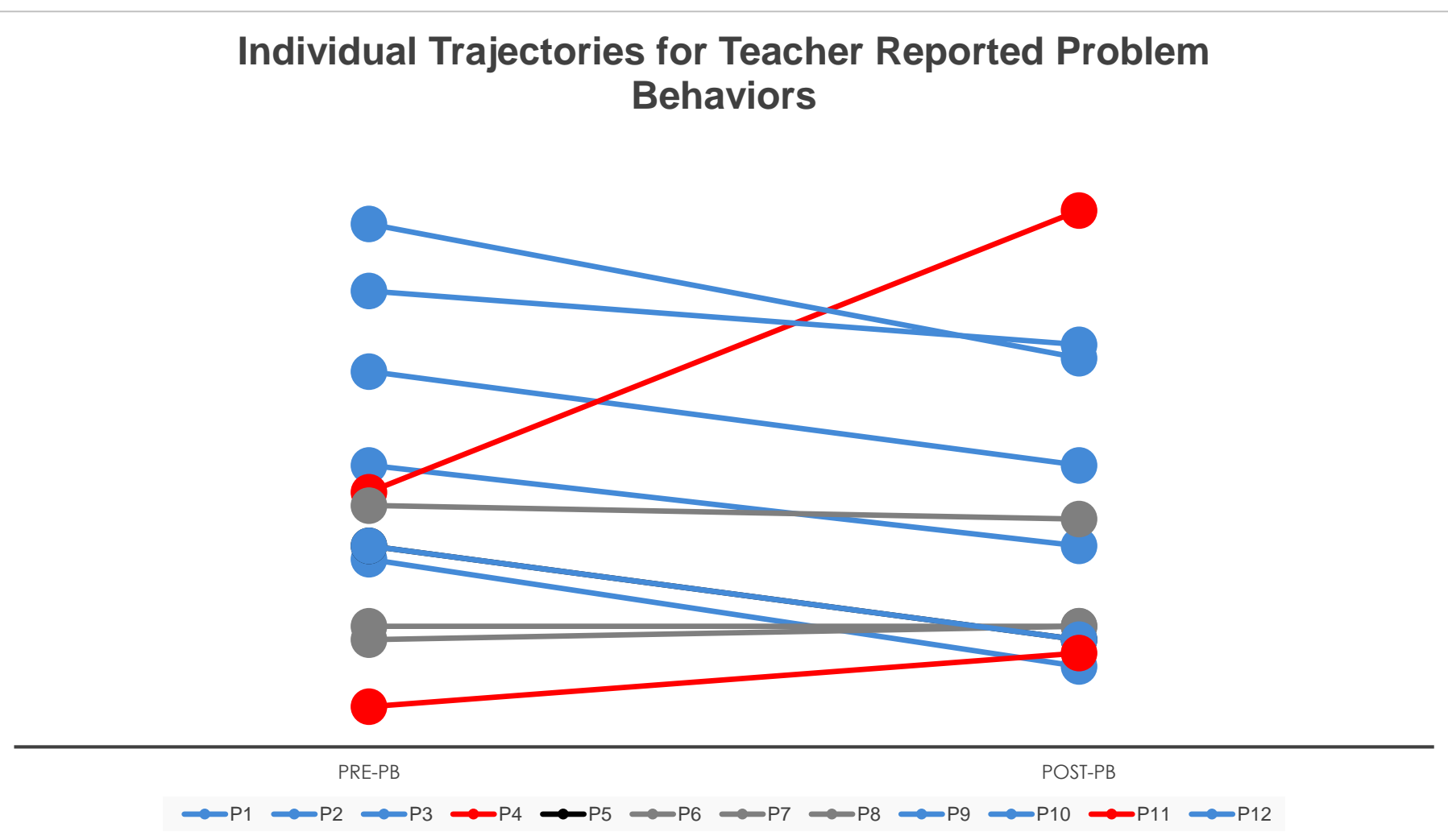
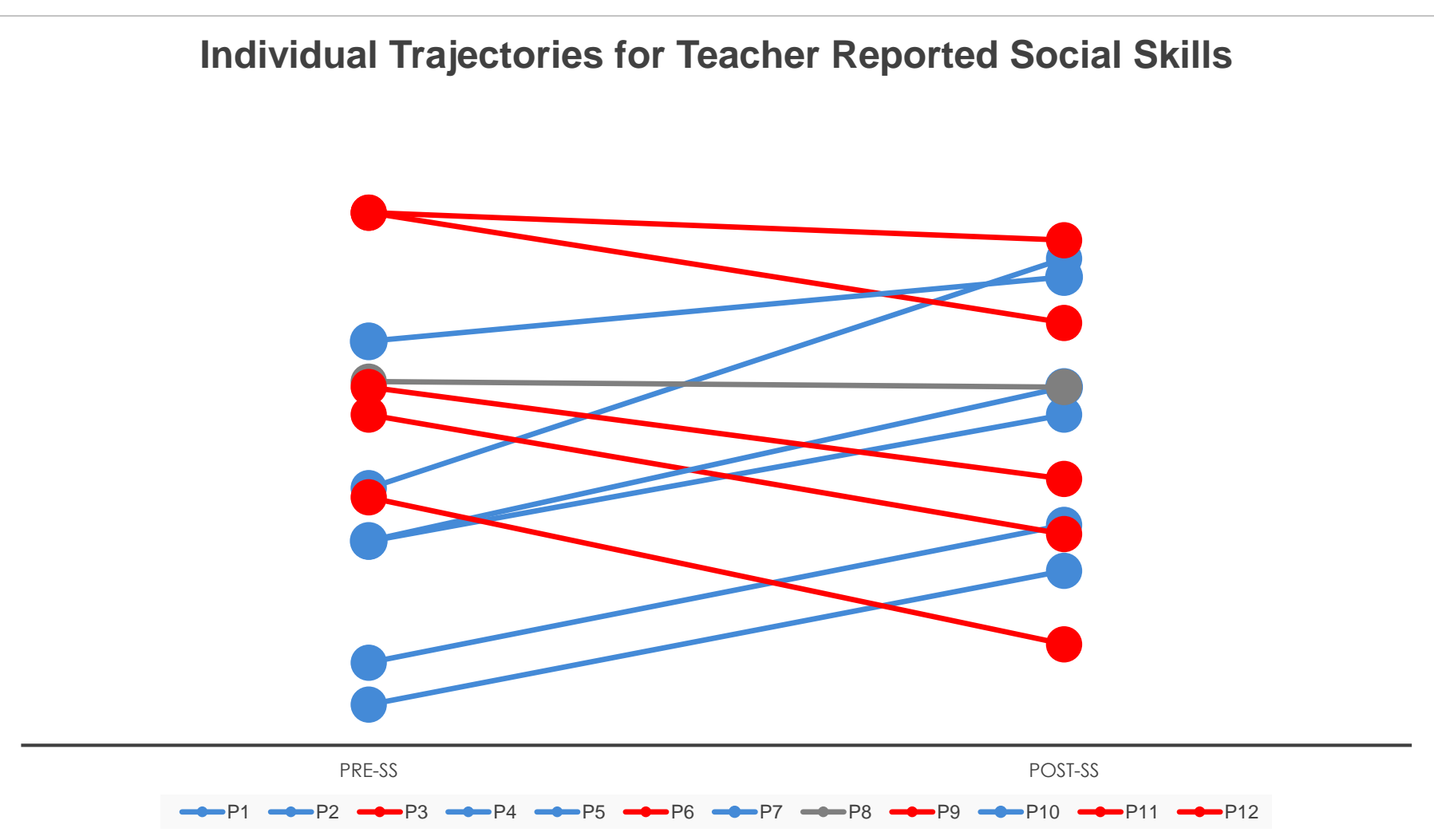
### Demographic Data

- 12 participants, all Hispanic
- 10/12 female (83.33%) and 2/12 male (16.67%)
- Average age of 14.08 years old (range: 13-15 years old)
- 91% participation rate

	Participants. $d(95\% CI)$	Teachers. $d(95\% CI)$
SESS	0.82 (-0.24, 1.79)	NA
TASSK	0.45 (-0.51, 1.36)	NA
Social Skills	-0.15 (-1.02, 0.73)	0.22 (-0.61, 0.99)
Problem Behaviors	0.07 (-0.81, 0.95)	-0.27 (-1.07, 0.54)
Communication	-0.33 (-1.19, 0.57)	0.1 (-0.71, 0.89)
Cooperation	-0.23 (-1.10, 0.65)	0.33 (-0.49, 1.12)
Assertiveness	0.03 (-0.85, 0.91)	0.39 (-0.43, 1.19)
Responsibility	-0.06 (-0.93, 0.82)	0.1 (-0.71, 0.89)
Empathy	-0.23 (-1.10, 0.66)	-0.07 (-0.87, 0.73)
Engagement	-0.25 (-1.12, 0.64)	0.07 (-0.73, 0.87)
Self-control	0.23 (-0.66, 1.10)	0.6 (-0.24, 1.39)
Externalizing	0.06 (-0.86, 0.98)	0.07 (-0.74, 0.86)
Bullying	0.18 (-0.75, 1.10)	0.3 (-0.51, 1.09)
Hyperactivity	-0.02 (-0.95, 0.90)	-0.13 (-0.92, 0.68)
Internalizing	0.23 (-0.71, 1.14)	-0.45 (-1.24, 0.38)
Autism Spectrum	NA	0.14 (-0.67, 0.93)

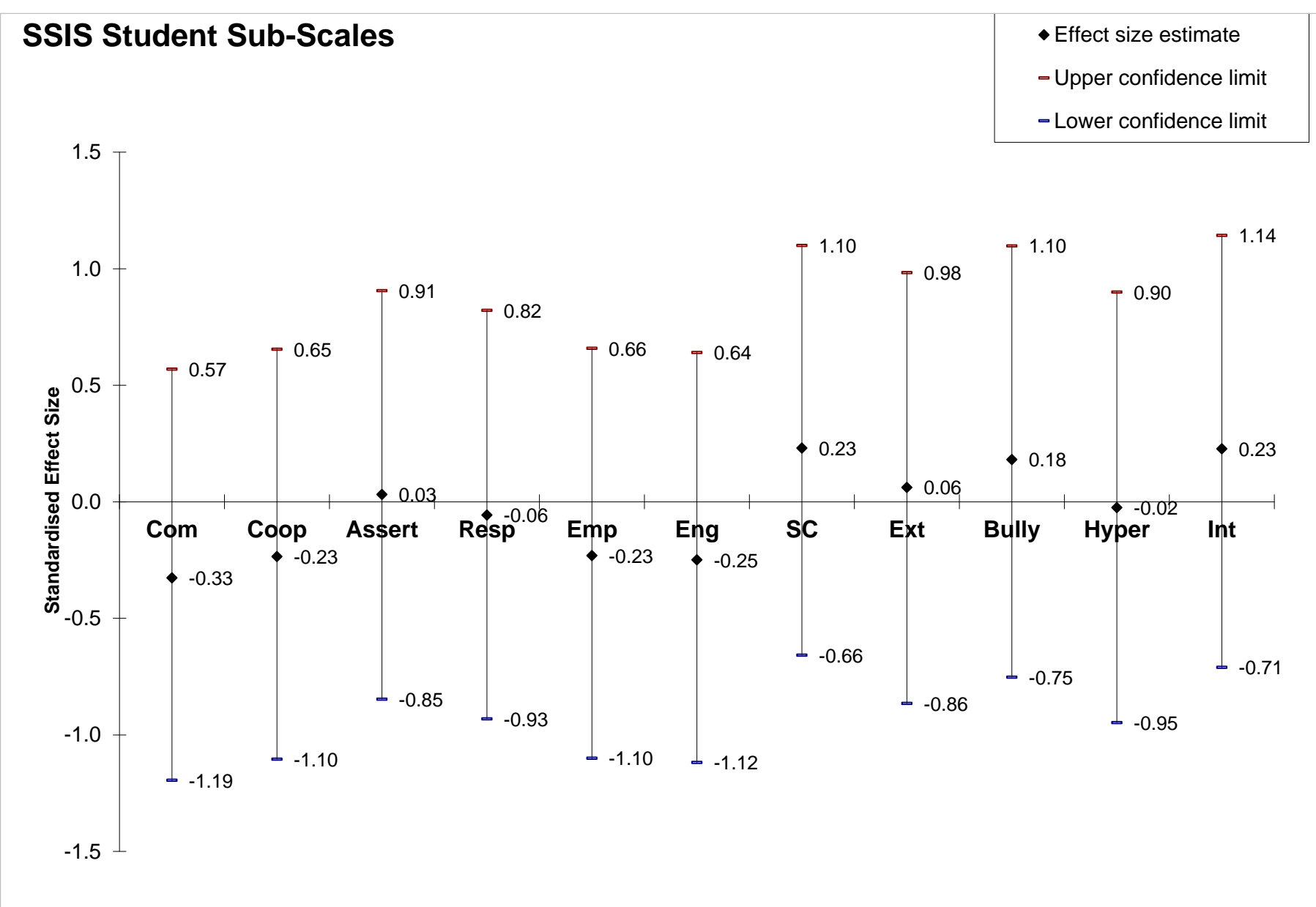
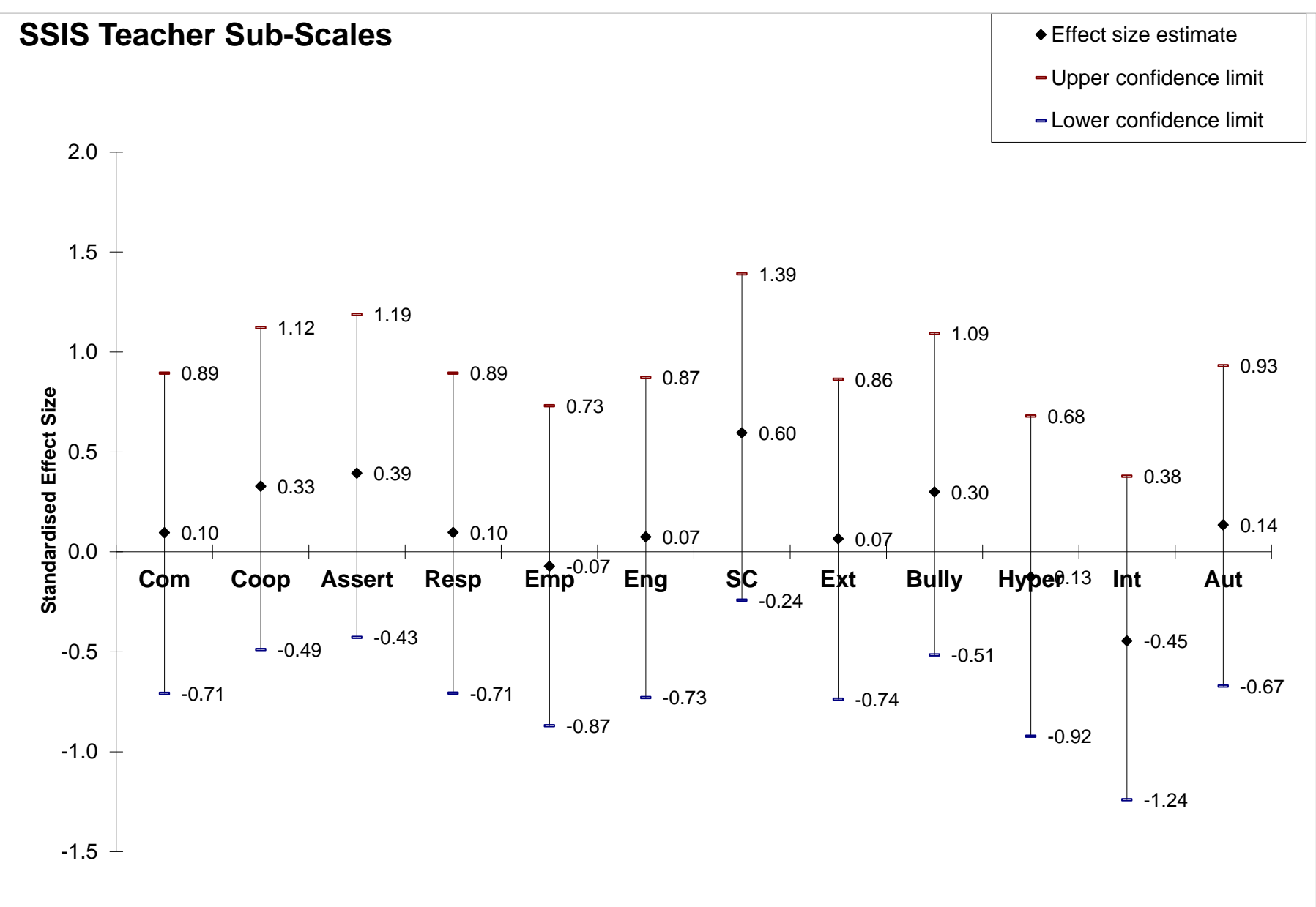
### SSIS Domain Improvements

- Teacher-rated social skills ( $d=0.22$ ) and problem behaviors ( $d=-0.27$ )
- NOTE: A positive effect size indicates a positive change for the social skills domain/subscales and a negative change for the problem behavior domain/subscales
- NOTE: For the following two graphs, blue lines indicate improvement, grey lines indicate no change, and red lines indicate worsening



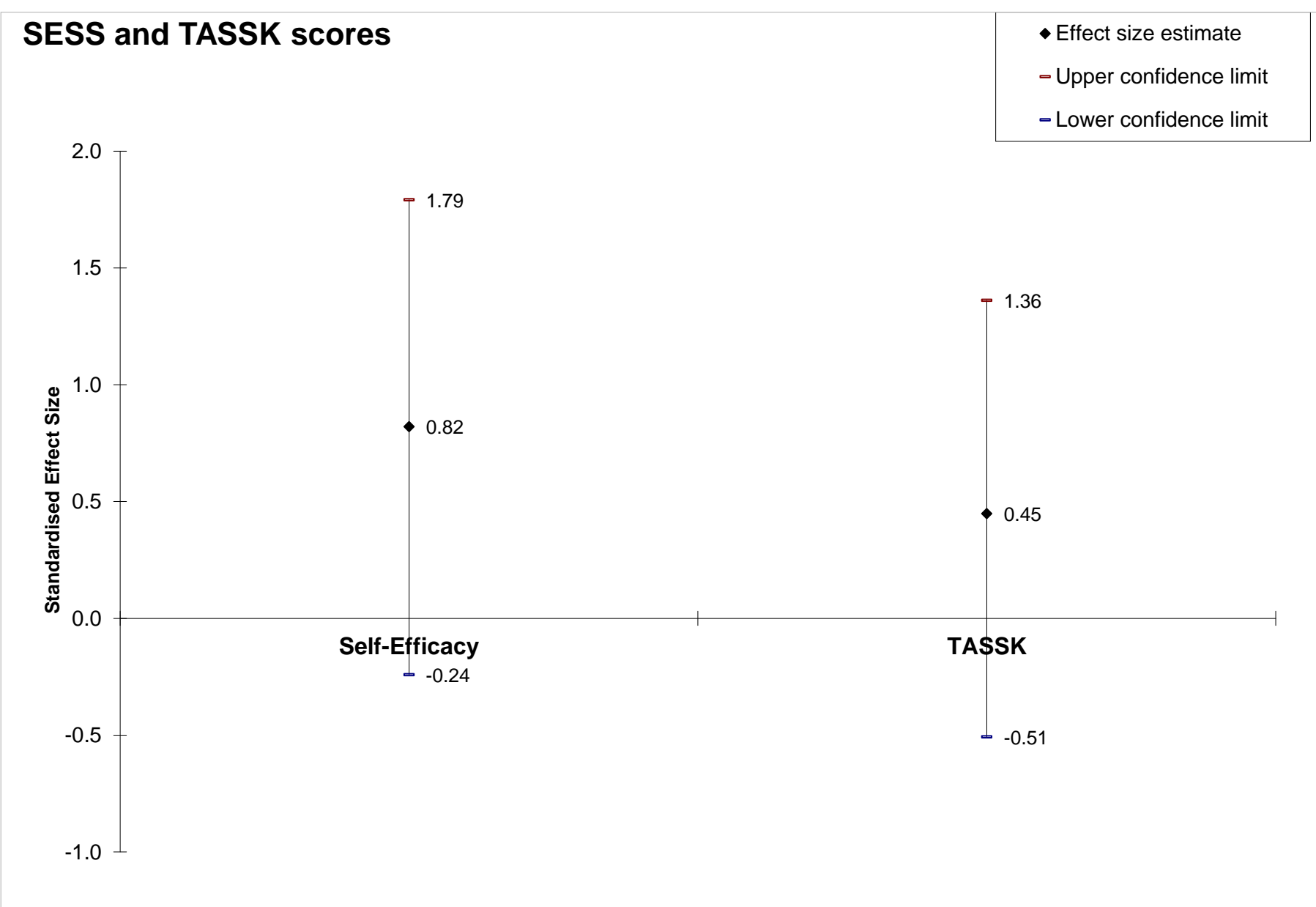
### SSIS Subscale Improvements

- Social skill subscales:
  - Teacher-rated self-control ( $d=0.60$ ), cooperation ( $d=0.33$ ), and assertiveness ( $d=0.39$ )
  - Participant-rated self-control ( $d=0.23$ )
- Problem behavior subscales:
  - Teacher-rated internalizing ( $d=-0.45$ )



### SESS and TASSK Improvements

- Participant-rated SESS scores ( $d=0.82$ )
- Participant-rated TASSK scores ( $d=0.45$ )



## Key Findings

- Teacher-rated social skills and problem behaviors improved, with specific improvements in self-control, cooperation, assertiveness, and internalizing behaviors
- Participant-rated self-control, self-efficacy, and social skill knowledge improved

## Conclusions

- SFC was well-attended and perceived to be beneficial by school officials
- SFC participation appears to impact teacher-rated social skills and problem behaviors more than participant-rated behaviors.
- Participants with lower teacher-reported social skills showed the most improvements, while most participants showed a reduction in problem behaviors regardless of initial behaviors

## Discussion

- Self-control and self-efficacy may be especially important in the fitness environment
- Poor adolescent self-assessment abilities vs. teacher-rating bias?

## Future Directions

- Larger sample size, increased participant diversity, inclusion of waitlist control group, identifying most impactful features of the program

## Acknowledgments

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