



TOUCHSTONES[®]

DISCUSSION PROJECT

BUILDING CRITICAL THINKERS & COLLABORATIVE LEADERS

WWW.TOUCHSTONES.ORG



WHAT IS THE TOUCHSTONES DISCUSSION PROJECT?

TOUCHSTONES WAS FOUNDED IN 1984 TO FOSTER STUDENT-CENTERED CLASSROOMS IN WHICH DISCUSSION, ACTIVE LEARNING, AND COLLABORATION ARE CENTRAL ACTIVITIES.

Since then, research has consistently shown that Touchstones accomplishes its goals through its unique, programmatic approach. It gives teachers and students the tools they need to develop their social-emotional skills and cognitive abilities through discussion-based learning.



TOUCHSTONES® GOALS

Touchstones programs yield demonstrable, measurable, and replicable growth in:

- Cooperative Learning
- Public Speaking
- Active Listening
- Self-confidence and Self-Efficacy
- Analytical or “Close” Reading
- Reflective Thinking and Self-Awareness
- Leadership



QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

From Teachers

- I think Touchstones has done its part to change the lives of my students...Touchstones has equalized the intellectual capital in our classrooms.
- I believe that the altercations in the hallways have decreased because of a direct result of using Touchstones in our classes across the building.
- I love the process materials that are provided with each discussion text. Your work in this area alone makes the process worthwhile.

From Students

- After we finish you feel empowered and strong, like a gust of wind.
- I believe this course has the power to transform the social, intellectual, and organizational dynamics at our university, for the better.
- I now fully consider other people's views and opinions. Prior to this, I was only half listening.

QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK



DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL IN BALTIMORE

- Funded by the Abell Foundation, reported in ASCD's *Educational Leadership*
- Dunbar used *Touchstones Volume I* in classrooms with students of varying academic ability.
- The 9th, 10th, and 11th graders' **test scores rose an average of 15 to 25 percent.**
 - The average score on the pretest was similar for all three grades, which suggests the increase in score was not due to the natural maturation of the student but rather to the Touchstones experience.
 - (12th grade students were unable to participate in the post-test because of graduation.)
- Students were also less likely to leave any answers blank on the post-test.

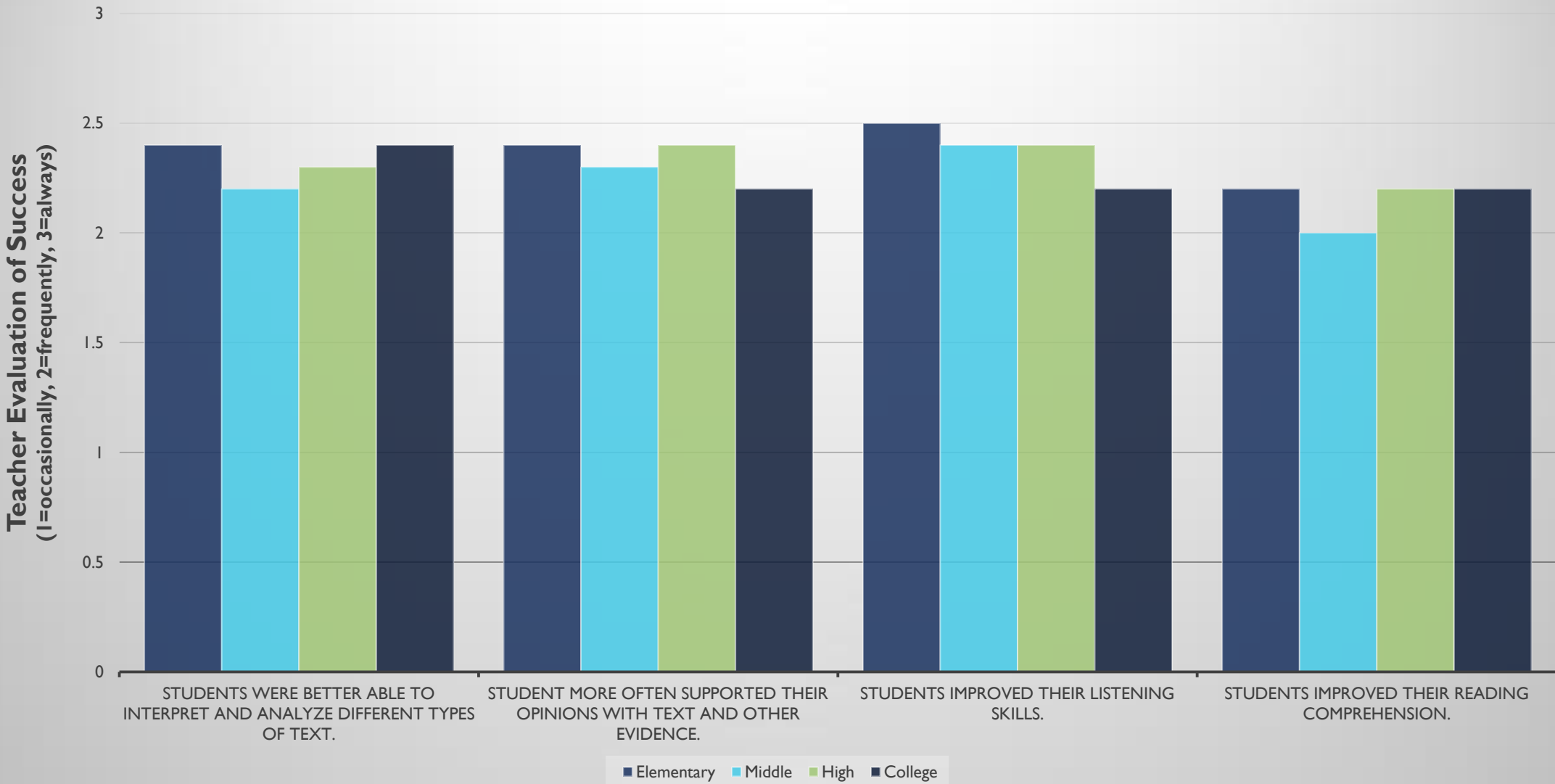


SOCIAL AND COGNITIVE SKILLS

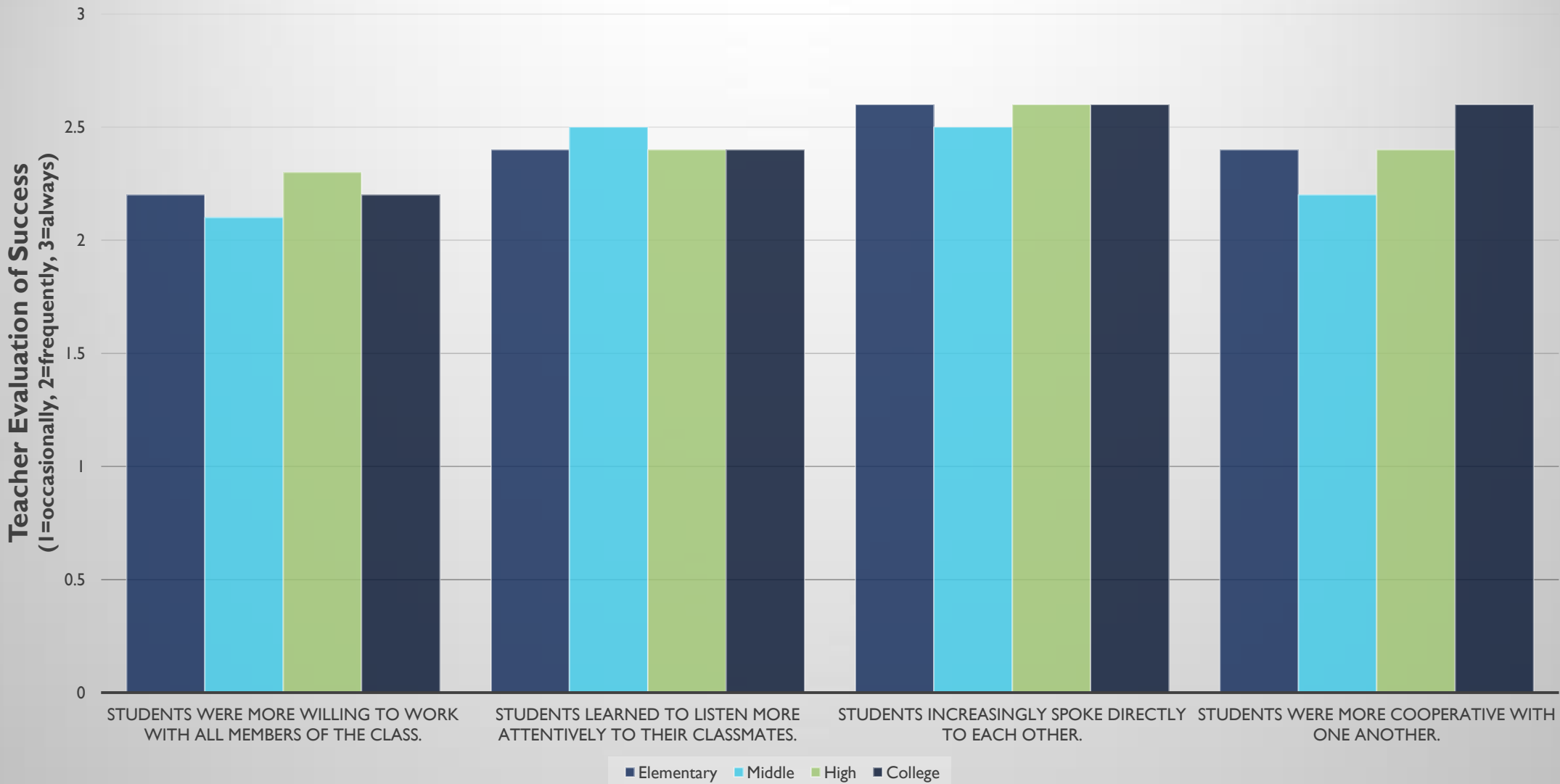
60 TEACHERS WERE SURVEYED TO ASSESS OUTCOMES IN THEIR CLASSROOMS AFTER TOUCHSTONES.

Teachers were asked to evaluate student progress on a range of skills, using a scale from 0 to 3. The data indicate a high degree of positive change across a range of cognitive and social skills.

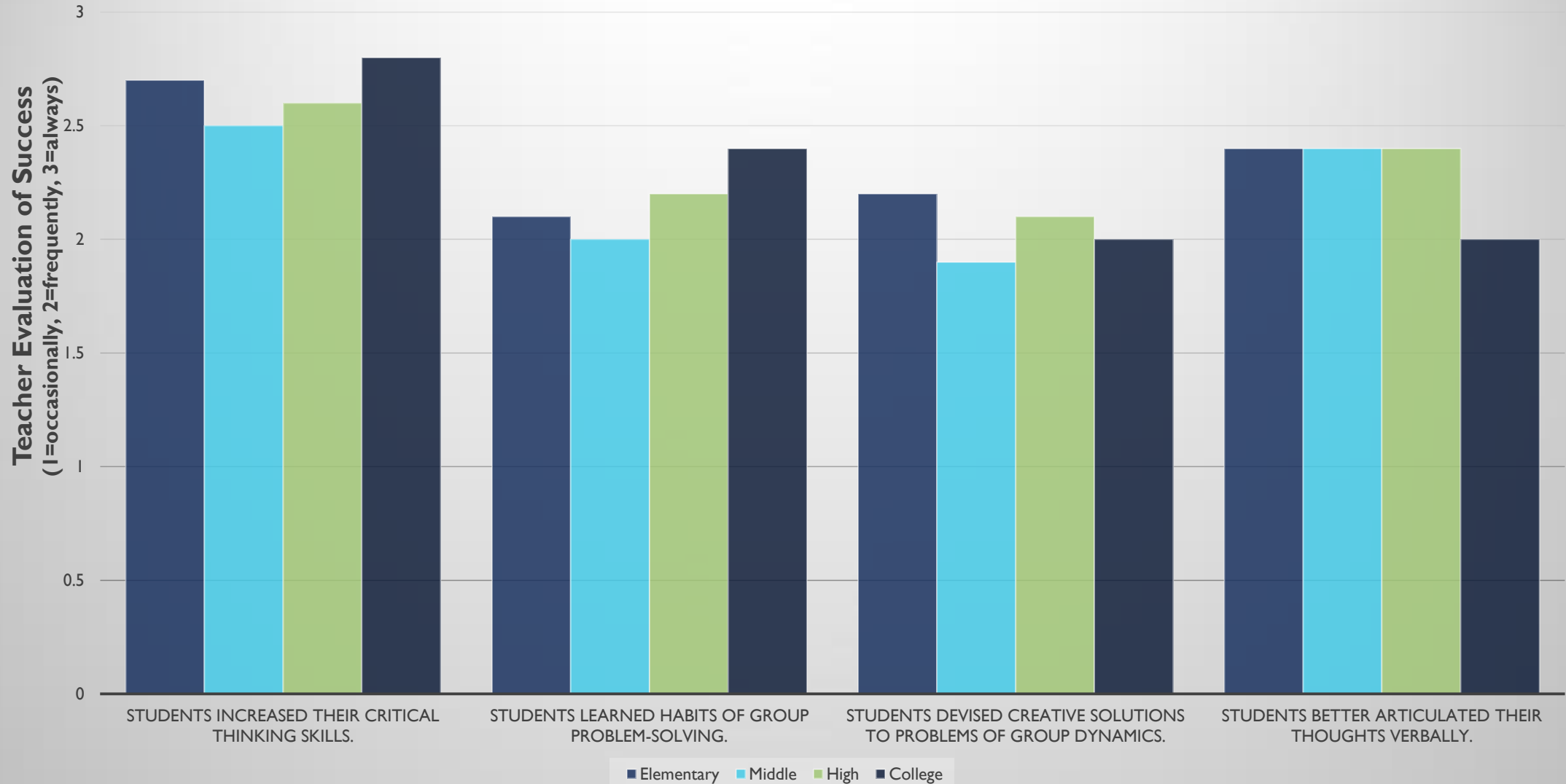
ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT after using Touchstones for one school year



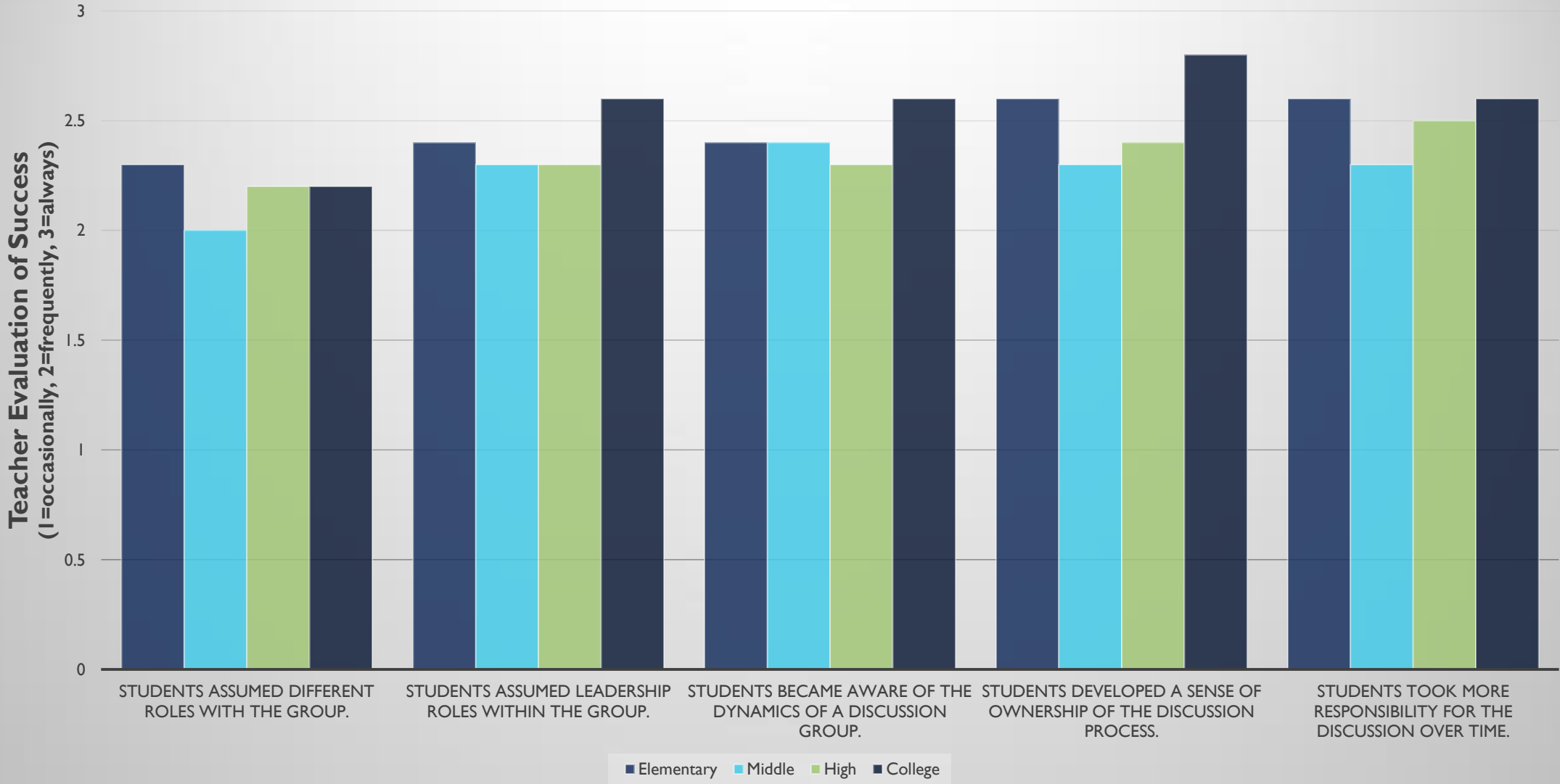
SOCIAL AWARENESS AND RELATIONSHIP SKILLS after using Touchstones for one school year



COGNITIVE SKILL DEVELOPMENT after using Touchstones for one school year



GROUP DYNAMICS AND SELF-MANAGEMENT after using Touchstones for one school year





“Weekly practice in leadership, active and inclusive listening, civil discussion, and consensus building through Touchstones large and small group work is invaluable.”

