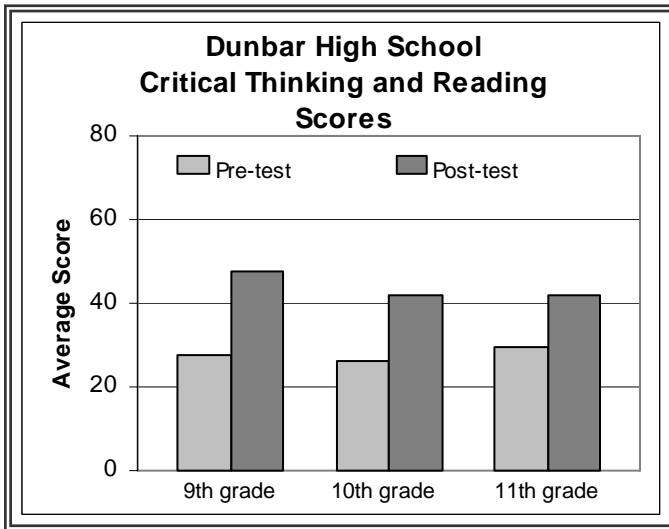


CRITICAL THINKING AND READING SKILLS CHANGE ACHIEVED THROUGH TOUCHSTONES DISCUSSIONS



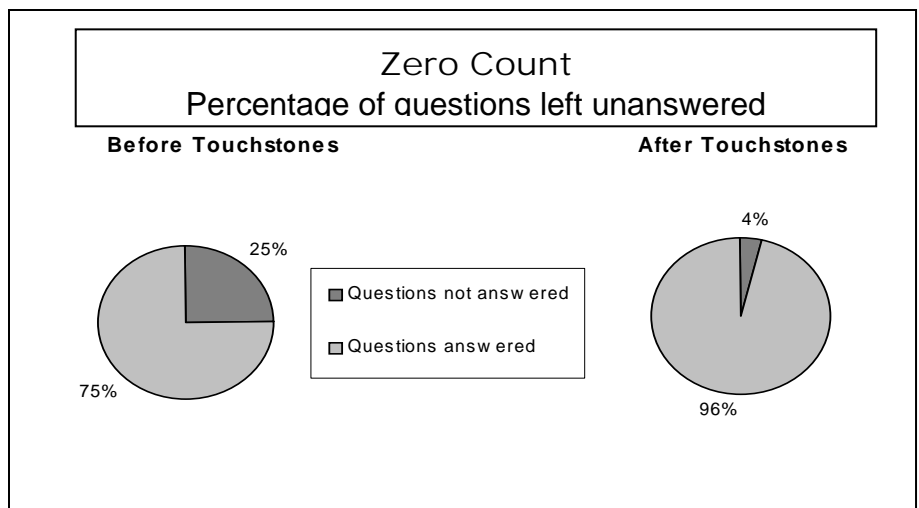
Students in grades 9, 10, and 11 were administered a pre and post-test designed to measure change in critical thinking and reading skills over the course of an academic year. During that year, Touchstones discussions were held for one hour per week. The following skills were tested with a series of questions: questioning techniques, defending opinions, identifying supporting evidence, and assuming other perspectives.

Out of 80 total points, all three grade levels averaged scores below 30 in their baseline test scores. At the end of a year using Touchstones, all three grades' average scores exceeded 40 points.

Score Averages, Change, & Percent Change				
	Pre-	Post-	Change	Change(%)
9 th Grade	27.8	47.4	+19.6	70%
10 th Grade	26.4	42.1	+15.7	59%
11 th Grade	29.3	42.1	+12.7	43%

With Touchstones experience, students gain more confidence and willingness to attempt answers to questions even when they are uncertain of the answers.

In the pre-test, a full quarter of the questions were not answered. After a year using Touchstones, the rate at which students failed to attempt answers dropped to 1 in 25, showing a significant increase in academic risk-taking.*



*A large body of academic research and literature demonstrates a positive correlation between academic risk-taking and increased academic motivation and achievement, particularly in reading and literacy.