AMERICAN KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA AND QUEBEC: A VIEW FROM MIDDLE AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

This research reports on a survey that was conducted for differing levels of Political Science and French classes at a major American university to assess the students' knowledge of Canada. We selected these classes with the expectation that students in Political Science and French classes would be more likely to be exposed to Canada than those in other disciplines. We also expect that the longer students studied in these disciplines, the greater would be their knowledge of Canada. However, our results show that students—regardless of the course discipline—possessed limited understanding of the Canadian geography, economics, sports and French language and French culture and that their level of knowledge did not increase from the introductory to the advanced courses in these disciplines. The important implication of this result is that if students are to learn about Canada, a more explicit integration of the topic into their curriculum is necessary.

Americans' lack of both knowledge of and interest in Canada is a source of regular comment by American Canadianists, who are perplexed and frustrated by the indifference to Canada they witness in the United States. Paul Gecelovsky (2007) argues that the lack of knowledge of Canada in the United States may have been of little significance at one time, as it allowed for the creation of an image of Canada as an idealized America of the past. However, the widely-cited erroneous idea that some of the 9/11 terrorists entered the United States from Canada, has transformed that lack of knowledge of Canada to a potential threat, according to Gecelovsky. He points out that the threat was seen as sufficiently urgent to have prompted several new initiatives by the Canadian government to close that knowledge gap.

As Americans' knowledge of Canada has become important in the relationship between Canada and the United States, it also achieves a position of significance in Canadian Studies. What has in the past been the subject of anecdotes, observations, and frustration needs to be better understood. Who lacks knowledge of Canada? Is this a characteristic of the general population, or do some Americans have some knowledge about Canada? For example, some segments of the population may be unaware of the capital of Canada, but surely university students of Political Science would know this fact. The official French language policy of Quebec may be unknown to a majority of Americans, but students studying French at American universities seemingly would know about this policy. In this study, we begin to examine American university students' knowledge of Canada and seek to determine whether university students are unlike the general public in the United States that Gecelovsky describes.

The public's lack of knowledge of Canada is a finding that crosses the border, as demonstrated by the results of the annual poll by the Dominion Institute showing that Canadians themselves score very poorly when their knowledge of their history, politics, culture and geography are tested. The overall conclusion of the 2007 poll was that the knowledge about Canada among citizens had declined significantly over the ten years that the polling

had occurred (Campbell 2007). Some examples from the 2007 results are illustrative of this limited knowledge:

- 66 percent correctly answered "fur" or "beaver" to a question about the trade of the Hudson Bay Co.
- 8 percent identified the Queen as Canada's head of state, and 50 percent incorrectly identified the prime minister as head of state.
- 59 percent were able to name four of the five Great Lakes.
- 32 percent correctly indicated how many provinces and territories Canada has.

The results reported in the *Globe and Mail* were for the complete sample of 1,005 randomly selected Canadians, but the story went on to acknowledge that citizens with a university education as well as those who are middle-aged and lived in urban centers had a high probability of obtaining a passing score. Whereas Canadians may have opportunities to learn about their country in higher education, it is not clear that similar opportunities exist in the United States. Indeed, a 2006 op-ed piece in a University newspaper, The *Iowa State Daily*, by a senior in Political Science raised the question of what students in the United States learn about Canada: "I—and I'm guessing that many of my fellow Americans are in the same boat –am unable to remember whether Montreal or Toronto is the capital of Canada, let alone locate it on a map." Nicole Asmussen (2006) continues:

> Who even knows who governs Canada?
> When I asked one of my friends, she responded, "Isn't that one lady still in charge?" I, on the other hand, as a political science major with a superior knowledge of world affairs, felt certain that Canada's prime minister was a man, with a French-sounding name like Jacque and a last name beginning with the letter K. [Editor's note: Jean Chrétien left his post as Canada's prime minister in 2003.]
> Consulting a newspaper I was amazed to learn that Canadians elected a new prime minister just last week. In a surprising victory, Stephen Harper and the Conservative party snapped the reins of power from the Liberals who had ruled for the last 13 years.
> This was tremendous news, but I was suspicious. Why was this the first I had heard of it? Why the low profile? Why was all quiet on the northern front?

The editorial achieved its goal of poking fun at Americans' limited knowledge of Canada, but at the same time, one cannot help but wonder how such a large country with close proximity to the United States had escaped the attention of a Political Science major. Indeed, it invites us to investigate whether a university education is associated with a greater knowledge of Canada.

Our study investigated this question by testing knowledge about Canada of a sample of university students at Iowa State University. The sample was intended to include undergraduates whom we would expect to have had some exposure to Canada in their courses, and thus possess some demonstrable knowledge about our northern neighbor. One was a group of students in Political Science classes, whom we would expect to have studied various forms of government (such as the Canadian parliamentary system), foreign policy positions, and some economic information about other countries including Canada. We would expect students in Political Science classes to have had specific opportunities in their classes to learn about Canada; moreover, their interest and knowledge of politics should make them seek out opportunities to learn through the media about international politics. The Political Science sample was selected from two levels of students—beginners and advanced level students, from which we would expect to see an increase in scores reflecting an increase in knowledge of Canada from the beginners to the advanced levels. The second was a group of students taking French classes, whom we would expect to have been exposed to French Canadian culture, Canadian language policy, and the opportunity to study French in a study abroad program in Quebec. Like the Political Science students, the French students would be expected to increase their knowledge of particular aspects of Canada the more they study French.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Four specific research questions guided our inquiry in assessing these students' knowledge of Canada and in comparing their relative level of knowledge by these different samples of students. In particular, four clusters of questions were investigated:

> **1.** How well do students in Political Science and French classes perform on a test of knowledge of Canada and on individual items concerning politics, geography, and language and culture? Whereas the general population in the United States is assumed to be largely unfamiliar with Canada, it is possible that university students with some interest in issues beyond the United States would have some knowledge of Canada. If this is the case, we would

expect students to achieve high scores on the Canada test we developed, which includes questions about geography, politics, culture, and language.

2. Do students in Political Science classes differ from those in French classes with respect to overall knowledge of Canada or in knowledge of any areas of Canada? We would anticipate that students in Political Science would perform better on those items pertaining to politics and that students in French classes would perform better on those items pertaining to Canadian language and French Canadian culture.

3. Do students taking an advanced Political Science course differ in performance from those who are beginners in Political Science? If students studying Political Science are exposed to and taught about Canada, we would expect to see better performance on the survey and on the specific questions targeting Political Science by the students in the 300-level Political Science class than by those in the 200-level Political Science class.

4. Do students in three levels of French classes differ in performance? If students studying French are exposed to and taught about Canada, we would expect to see better performance on the survey and on the specific questions targeting French language and culture by the students as their levels increase from 100-level to 200-level, and 300-level French classes.

METHOD

These questions were investigated through the use of a cross-sectional survey of university students sampled from the relevant courses. The survey was intended to be as brief as possible so as not to take too much class time. Instructors of the targeted classes were asked for 20 minutes of class time and were open to providing us with this time.

SAMPLES

For the Political Science classes, we surveyed two introductory comparative politics courses (Political Science 241), taught by different instructors, and an upper division course on Western European government (Political Science 346), taught by one of the same instructors. Both instructors indicated to us that they either do not discuss Canada or Canadian politics in those classes or do slightly around a particular issue (e.g., health care policy). For the lower division classes in Political Science, the number of respondents was 84 (40 in one, 44 in the other). For the upper division class, the total number of respondents was 63.

Ideally, we would have sampled advanced and beginning level French classes as well, but because of the smaller numbers of students in the French classes we ended up with classes spread across each of three levels. One class was at the introductory level (French 102) with 11 respondents, two classes at the intermediate level (French 202) with 37 respondents and one class at the advanced level (French 304) with 12 respondents. Three different French instructors taught these four classes. One of the instructors in the French 202 class has an interest in Canada and indicated that he had spoken about Canada occasionally. Analysis of the textbook used in the 102 class indicated that Canada was mentioned and information about French-speaking Quebec was included (Chapelle, in press); Celine Dion is mentioned regularly in such textbooks; it is very likely that students of French would be aware of this Canadian celebrity.

CONTENT OF THE SURVEY

We developed a twenty-five item, multiple-choice survey covering important aspects of Canadian society, politics, and culture. The questions targeted knowledge about sports, geography, economics, government and politics, as well as language and French culture. Table 1 identifies the questions addressing these areas of knowledge from the questionnaire and the research question pertaining to each area. (The complete survey is attached as Appendix A.)

PROCEDURES

Students in the three Political Science classes and four French classes were surveyed near the end of spring 2008 semester at Iowa State University. After the instructors had been contacted and an appropriate time has been decided upon, the surveys were conducted by a graduate assistant who read the same protocol statement to each of the classes. That protocol asked the students to participate voluntarily, promised confidentiality of the individual questionnaire responses, and noted that the results would only be reported in aggregate totals. The students could skip any question that they felt uncomfortable in completing. In general, the preponderance of students completed the questionnaire, although several students skipped one or more items. After examining the responses, we decided to not use two questionnaires

TABLE 1. Areas of knowledge of Canada reflected on the Canada test

AREA OF KNOWLEDGE	QUESTION NUMBER AND TOPIC	ANALYSIS PERTAINING TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Sports	1-Most popular sport 20-Nickname of Toronto's baseball team	1
Geography	5-Number of provinces 10-Population 11-Capital 14-Province north of Minnesota 18-Location of Canadian population 22-Location of Halifax 24-Newest territory	1
Economics	3-Largest trading partner 4-Natural gas 21-Important oil center	1,2
Government & Politics	2-NAFTA 6-System of government 8-Canada in Afghanistan 9-Party with most seats in Parliament 15-Border 17- Canada deployed in Afghanstan 19-Current Prime Minister 23-Universal health coverage 25-Leader associated with the golden age	1, 2, 4
Language and French Culture	7-Canada's official languages policy 12-Celine Dion's place of origin 13-Québec's language policy 16- Province with French-speaking majority	1, 3, 4

where only a few questions at the beginning were answered, and the respondents did not appear to seek to complete the survey (rather than just skipping some questions). Hence, the total number of respondents for the upper division Political Science class was reduced by one to 62, and the total number of respondents in the intermediate French class was also reduced by one to 36.

The demographic profiles of the respondents are largely the same across the Political Science and French classes. For both of these types of classes, the year in school was distributed across the four years, but there were larger percentages of students in the freshmen and sophomore years among the respondents than in the junior and senior years. Since more of the classes were at the introductory level, this distribution would be expected. In the Political Science classes, about 56 percent of the respondents were freshmen and sophomores, and in the French classes, about 58 percent were at those years in college. Both of these classes had a graduate student respondent as well. The differing sets of classes also shared similar background with about 66 percent of Political Science students from Iowa and 54 percent of French students from Iowa. The states surrounding Iowa (Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Missouri) were the home state of most other students in these classes, but there were also a few students from eastern or western states. Both sets of classes had international students with the Political Science classes having about 4 percent (including one from Canada) and the French classes having 7 percent (including one from Canada). Most of the Political Science respondents indicated that their classes had little Canadian content and those that had such content was generally minimal. About a third of the French students, however, indicated that there was between 5 percent and 25 percent of Canadian content in their courses. Finally, only about a quarter of the Political Science and French respondents indicated that they had seen two or more stories about Canada in the media during the previous three months.

ANALYSIS

The responses were entered in to an Excel file by a research assistant and examined to identify any respondents who had obviously not attempted to complete the survey seriously. The item responses were then recoded as either correct or incorrect to create a file with individual item scores of one and zero. Subsequent analysis was conducted by using this file and running SPSS to calculate score reliability for the whole group, and then to calculate the scale mean and item means for the whole group. This same statistical package was then used to determine whether any statistically significant differences existed in the total scores and between the relevant items *between* students in Political Science classes and those in French classes. Furthermore, we undertook the same kind of analysis for students in the two different levels of Political Science classes and among the three different levels of French classes to see if differences exist *within* these groupings.

RESULTS

AGGREGATE KNOWLEDGE OF CANADA

The KR-20 reliability was .44 for the whole group with 25 items, which reflected the relatively small variance found in the scores and was due, in part, to the homogeneity of the total group with respect to their knowledge of Canada as well as the small number of items on the scale. Because of the low reliability, the item level

comparisons are more meaningful that those for the total score. Nevertheless, these scale totals and their standard deviations are reported for each of the groups. Across the entire set of respondents, the average percentage correct on the survey was 54.6 percent, or roughly 14 of the 25 questions were answered correctly, on average, by the students surveyed (see Table 2). Thirty-five percent of those surveyed correctly answered twelve or fewer questions, or less than half of the total. Fifty-three percent of the respondents scored between 13 and 17 correct, and only twelve percent obtained a scores higher than 17 (with the highest at 22 correct responses). By conventional standards of passing the test, fewer than 10 percent of the respondents achieved scores of 70 percent or better on the survey.

TABLE 2. Average Scores among Political Science and French Students on a Twenty-Five Item Canadian Questionnaire

	MEAN NUMBER CORRECT (STANDARD DEVIATION)	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
All Students	13.65 (2.77)	N=205
Political Science Students	13.89 (2.80)	N=146
Lower Division	13.77 (2.55)	N=84
Upper Division	14.08 (3.13)	N=62
French Students	13.05 (2.62)	N=59
Introductory	14.09 (4.11)	N=11
Intermediate	12.72 (2.12)	N=36
Advanced	13.08 (2.27)	N=12

Table 2 shows the mean number of correct responses and the standard deviations for the Political Science and French students separately and for the different class levels within these two groups. For the Political Science students, only a slight difference appears between the two sets of classes, although the upper division students do somewhat better, as one might expect, than lower division students. For the French students, the average scores are lower overall than for the Political Science students, probably due to the greater number of questions about government and politics, but, somewhat unexpectedly, the introductory French students have a higher mean scores than the other levels of French students—and just slightly higher than the Political Science students. To determine whether any of these differences are significant between Political Science and French students or among the different levels of Political Science and French students, we calculated a series of difference of means test. In all instances, we found the difference of means between Political Science and French students, between lower division and upper division Political Science students, and among the three levels of French students were not statistically significant. Hence, the aggregate level of knowledge about Canada did not differ *between* any of these groups of students.

The percentage of correct responses for each question in Table 3 reveals areas of strength and weakness in Canadian knowledge by our respondents. Since the questions were all presented in a multiple choice format with four options, one could expect a 25 percent correct response rate by chance alone. In view of this fact, items for which the percentage was less that 50 percent might be highlighted as points of extreme weakness, whereas those at or above the 70 percent mark would be considered as areas where the sample has substantial knowledge. In that light, we see that these university students are strong on knowledge of Canada's most popular sport, the location of most Canadians, Canada as a major supplier of natural gas to Iowa, members of NAFTA, the systems of government and health care, bilingual language policy, home of Celine Dion, and Quebec as the home of French speakers.

At the same time, areas in which the respondents had minimal knowledge were evident throughout the results. With geography questions, students had limited knowledge about Canada's population, its total number of provinces, the capital of Canada, and the most recently established territory. Some of the most frequent incorrect responses to these questions are instructive. Many thought that Canada's population was half the size of that of the United States; equal percentages of respondents thought that Montreal and Toronto were the capital as the percentage who correctly identified Ottawa; and the Yukon Territory and Prince Edward Island received about equal number of choices as Nunavut from the respondents as the newest established territory. Within the economics area, questions with extremely low percentages of correct responses were about Canada as the biggest trading partner of the United States (most thought China was), and about an important city in the Canadian oil industry (many selected Winnipeg rather than Calgary). In politics, very few students knew the party with the most seats in parliament (the modal response was the Liberals), Canada's policy toward Afghanistan, the current Prime Minister (Trudeau and Chretien were about as equally likely to be selected as Harper), or the leader during the Golden Age of Canadian diplomacy (Lester Pearson). With respect to language and French culture, few students knew about the existence of Quebec's French only policy; instead many selected the option of Quebec as a "distinct society" as a defining characteristic. In all, the respondents only demonstrated "substantial knowledge" of Canada on nine of the twenty-five questions.

TABLE 3. Percentage of Correct Responses from students in a Twenty-five Item Survey about Canada (N=205)

TOPIC	PERCENTAGE	INTERPRETATION
I. Sports		
Canada's Most Popular Sport	98%	**Substantial knowledge**
Toronto's MLB Nickname	67.8%	
II. Geography		
Number of Provinces in Canada	34.6%	Minimal knowledge
Population of Canada	30.7%	Minimal knowledge
Capital of Canada	28.8%	Minimal knowledge
Province North of Minnesota	55.1%	
Location of Most Canadians	81.5%	**Substantial knowledge**
Location of Halifax	52.2%	
Most Recently Established Territory	22.9%	Minimal knowledge
III. Economics		
Rank in Regards to US Trade	19.0%	Minimal knowledge
Iowa's Supplier of Natural Gas	73.7%	**Substantial knowledge**
Center of Canada's Oil Industry	28.8%	Minimal knowledge
IV. Government and Politics		
Members of NAFTA	89.8%	**Substantial knowledge**
System of National Government	72.2%	**Substantial knowledge**
Current Military Involvement	62.4%	
Party with Most Seats in Parliament	26.8%	Minimal knowledge
Border Policy with US	57.1%	
Policy toward Afghanistan	30.7%	Minimal knowledge
Current Prime Minister	23.4%	Minimal knowledge
System of Health Coverage	90.2%	**Substantial knowledge**
Leader of "Golden Age" of Diplomacy	16.1%	Minimal knowledge
V. Language and French Culture		
Canada's Official Languages	92.2%	**Substantial knowledge**
Childhood Home of Celine Dion	75.1%	**Substantial knowledge**
Quebec's French Language Policy	42.4%	Minimal knowledge
Province with most French-speaking people	93.7%	**Substantial knowledge**

COMPARISONS ACROSS FRENCH AND POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS ON THE ITEMS

What about the differences between Political Science and French students? Does either group exhibit more knowledge than the other across the twenty-five items? As noted earlier, the overall mean scores for the French students (13.05) and the political science students (13.89) were very close. Does that overall similarity conceal differences in certain areas of knowledge about Canada? Particularly on questions concerning government and politics, Political Science students would be expected to have an advantage, whereas on questions pertaining to language and French culture, one would expect to see stronger performance by the French students. These were both areas in which individual questions produced either very high or very low mean scores for both groups, as Table 4 shows.

In the area of government and politics, the two groups obtained exactly the same scores indicating substantial knowledge or minimal knowledge. For example, Political Science students are no more likely to know the prime minister of Canada than are students of French. Only one question within the government and politics section yielded a significant difference in the hypothesized direction: Thirty-two percent of political science students knew the party holding the most seats in parliament while only 15 percent of French students responded correctly to that question. Although this difference was statistically significant, the absolute magnitude of the percentages suggests that neither group could be said to have any clear idea of the party composition of the Canadian parliament.

In the area of language and French culture, knowledge about Canada's official languages and Quebec as the French majority province was substantial across the two groups, but knowledge of Quebec's French only language policy was almost equally unknown across the two groups. It is particularly interesting that students of French do not know about the French only policy because this is a policy that would potentially make Quebec an ideal location for a study abroad choice for these students. Students of French are not eager to invest their time and money to travel to a place where people will speak English to them. Information about the French only policy in Quebec typically appears in beginning level text books in French. For example, this information appears in a cultural note in the book used by first year students of French at Iowa State University, *Entre Amis*:

> By the beginning of the 1960s, French Canadians considered themselves not so much a minority in the Canadian Confederation as the Francophone majority in the province of Quebec. This

TABLE 4. Percentage of Correct Responses from Students of Political Science and French in a survey about Canada

	POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS (N=146)	FRENCH STUDENTS (N=59)
I. Sports		
Canada's Most Popular Sport	97.9%	98.3%
Toronto's MLB Nickname	69.9%	62.7%
II. Geography		
Number of Provinces in Canada	37.0%	28.8%
Population of Canada	28.8%	35.6%
Capital of Canada	29.5%	27.1%
Province North of Minnesota	58.2%	47.5%
Location of Most Canadians	83.6%	76.3%
Location of Halifax	56.2%	42.4%
Most Recently Established Territory	21.9%	25.4%
III. Economics		
Rank in Regards to US Trade	24.0%	6.8%*
Iowa's Supplier of Natural Gas	79.5%	59.3%*
Center of Canada's Oil Industry	30.1%	25.4%
IV. Government and Politics		
Members of NAFTA	90.4%	88.1%
System of National Government	73.3%	69.5%
Current Military Involvement	65.1%	55.9%
Party with Most Seats in Parliament	31.5%	15.3%*
Border Policy with US	57.5%	55.9%
Policy toward Afghanistan	31.5%	28.8%
Current Prime Minister	22.6%	25.4%
System of Health Coverage	91.1%	88.1%
Leader of "Golden Age" of Diplomacy	14.4%	20.3%
V. Language and French Culture		
Canada's Official Languages	92.5%	91.5%
Childhood Home of Celine Dion	68.5%	91.5%*
Quebec's French Language Policy	43.2%	40.7%
Province with most French-speaking people	91.8%	98.3%

*Difference between Political Science and French students is significant at p<.05

> situation culminated in the passage of the Charter of the French Language in 1977, which established French as the sole official language in the province of Quebec. Its goal was to 'ensure the quality and influence of the French language' in North American civilization. (Oates, & Oukada, 2006, p. 84)

It is likely that students of French have been exposed to this fact, but did not remember it.

The childhood home of Celine Dion is another fact that students of French would have been exposed to in their French classes. For example, in *Entre Amis*, students read a paragraph about Celine Dion, which includes the following: "Née le trente mars 1968 à Charlemagne, un petit village canadien près de Montréal, Céline a huit soeurs et cinq frères." (Oates, & Oukada, 2006, p. 85-86). In this case the exposure or information obtained elsewhere was sufficient to allow students of French to remember this information—even to the extent that they perform significantly better on this question than do the students of Political Science. In this case, the group as a whole showed substantial knowledge on the question of Celine Dion's home (75.1 percent), but this strong performance was because of the knowledge of the French students in particular and their 91.5 percent performance on the question relative to the fewer than 70 percent of the Political Science students who responded correctly.

Finally, in the area of economics, we found two significant differences between Political Science and French students. Political Science students were more aware of the rank of Canada as America's trading partner and the source of Iowa's natural gas than French students. While the differences are significant, the absolute level of knowledge on the rank of Canada as a trading partner is very low—and could be accounted for by guessing alone.

COMPARISONS ACROSS LOWER DIVISION AND UPPER DIVISION POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS

Table 5 extends our analysis to compare lower division and upper division Political Science students and their knowledge of Canada. The overall scores obtained by the lower division Political Science students (13.77) appear similar to those of the upper division political science students (14.08). Yet, we should expect that if student in Political Science actually learn about Canada during the course of their study that greater differences should appear in the percentages of the items related to government and politics and perhaps in geography and economics.

TABLE 5. Percentage of Correct Responses of Students in Lower Division and Upper Division Political Science Courses on a Twenty-five Item Survey on Canada

	LOWER DIVISION STUDENTS (N=84)	UPPER DIVISION STUDENTS (N=62)
I. Sports		
Canada's Most Popular Sport	98.8%	96.8%
Toronto's MLB Nickname	75.0%	62.9%
II. Geography		
Number of Provinces in Canada	34.5%	40.3%
Population of Canada	23.8%	35.5%
Capital of Canada	26.2%	33.9%
Province North of Minnesota	48.8%	71.0%*
Location of Most Canadians	82.1%	85.5%
Location of Halifax	60.7%	50.0%
Most Recently Established Territory	22.6%	21.0%
III. Economics		
Rank in Regards to US Trade	23.8%	24.2%
Iowa's Supplier of Natural Gas	79.8%	79.0%
Center of Canada's Oil Industry	28.6%	32.3%
IV. Government and Politics		
Members of NAFTA	88.1%	93.5%
System of National Government	72.6%	74.2%
Current Military Involvement	67.9%	61.3%
Party with Most Seats in Parliament	31.0%	32.3%
Border Policy with US	61.9%	51.6%
Policy toward Afghanistan	29.8%	33.9%
Current Prime Minister	23.8%	21.0%
System of Health Coverage	89.3%	93.5%
Leader of "Golden Age" of Diplomacy	19.0%	8.1%
V. Language and French Culture		
Canada's Official Languages	90.5%	95.2%
Childhood Home of Celine Dion	66.7%	71.0%
Quebec's French Language Policy	42.9%	43.5%
Province with most French-speaking people	89.3%	95.2%

*Difference between lower division and upper division Political Science students significant at p<.05

The item-by-item analysis, however, suggests no statistically significant differences and no evidence that students in upper division Political Science courses had learned more about the government and politics of Canada than lower division students. The percentage of correct responses on all of the questions about government and politics are virtually the same for the two groups, and no statistically significant differences appear, except for one geography item. Upper division political science students are more fully able to identify correctly the province directly north of Minnesota, Ontario. Only 49 percent of the lower division students responded correctly on this item, while 71 percent of the upper division Political Science students did.

COMPARISONS ACROSS THREE LEVELS OF FRENCH STUDENTS

Table 6 does the same kind of comparisons across the three levels of French as that done for the two levels of Political Science students. In drawing comparisons among the three groups of French students, we need to note the small sample sizes of the introductory and advanced groups. Small samples produce unstable results on item scores, but we will nevertheless look for the expected trends across the three groups on the item performance on the questions about French. One might expect the most advanced level learners to have the highest percentages correct on the questions concerning French, despite the fact that in overall scores on the survey, it was the introductory class that scored the highest (56.11, compared to 50.9 for the intermediate, and 52.3 for the advanced).

All three groups performed well on the three questions concerning Canada's bilingual policy, the home of Celine Dion, and the province with the most French speaking people. These were three questions on which the French students were categorically strong, thus opening little space for variation across the three groups. The question about Quebec's French Only policy, in contrast, shows considerable variation, albeit in the expected direction. Each group studying French progressively longer was more likely to know about the French Only policy in Quebec. Despite the appearance of the hypothesized trend, it is important to note the actual magnitude of the knowledge across all three groups, all of which would be defined according to the 50 percent cut off indicating little knowledge of this fact. In other words, fewer than 50 percent of the students studying French in the United States in a location that is a two day drive from Quebec know that Quebec has a French only language

TABLE 6. Percentage of Correct Responses of Students in Three Different Levels of French Courses on a Twenty-five Item Survey on Canada

	FRENCH 102 (N=11)	FRENCH 202 (N=36)	FRENCH 304 (N=12)
I. Sports			
Canada's Most Popular Sport	90.9%	100.0%	100.0%
Toronto's MLB Nickname	90.9%	55.6%	58.3%
II. Geography			
Number of Provinces in Canada	36.4%	27.8%	25.0%
Population of Canada	54.5%	30.6%	33.3%
Capital of Canada	27.3%	19.4%	50.0%
Province North of Minnesota	9.1%	58.3%	50.0%*
Location of Most Canadians	90.9%	69.4%	83.3%
Location of Halifax	36.4%	47.2%	33.3%
Most Recently Established Territory	45.5%	19.4%	25.0%
III. Economics			
Rank in Regards to US Trade	18.2%	2.8%	8.3%
Iowa's Supplier of Natural Gas	72.7%	52.8%	66.7%
Center of Canada's Oil Industry	27.3%	27.8%	16.7%
IV. Government and Politics			
Members of NAFTA	90.9%	88.9%	83.3%
System of National Government	72.7%	72.2%	58.3%
Current Military Involvement	63.6%	58.3%	41.7%
Party with Most Seats in Parliament	36.4%	8.3%	16.7%
Border Policy with US	54.5%	55.6%	58.3%
Policy toward Afghanistan	45.5%	27.8%	16.7%
Current Prime Minister	36.4%	25.0%	16.7%
System of Health Coverage	90.9%	86.1%	91.7%
Leader of "Golden Age" of Diplomacy	9.1%	16.7%	41.7%
V. Language and French Culture			
Canada's Official Languages	90.9%	94.4%	83.3%
Childhood Home of Celine Dion	100.0%	86.1%	100.0%
Quebec's French Language Policy	18.2%	44.4%	50.0%
Province with most French-speaking people	100.0%	97.2%	100.0%

*Difference among the three levels of French student is significant at $p < .05$.

policy. Finally, the only result for this table that is statistically significant among these groups is the identification of the province north of Minnesota, although the level of absolute knowledge on this question is low to modest and not entirely in the predicted direction.

CONCLUSION

In view of the perceived importance of knowledge of Canada in the United States for maintaining accurate perceptions of and actions toward Canada, one might hope that students with a university education in the United States would have greater knowledge of Canada and that students studying longer would have more knowledge of Canada. Our survey indicated that students have some sporadic knowledge of Canadian geography, economics, and government/politics. In particular, our respondents were knowledge about Canada's most popular sport, the location of most Canadians, Canada as a big supplier of natural gas to Iowa, members of NAFTA, the systems of government and health care, bilingual language policy, the home of Celine Dion, and Quebec as the home of French speakers. However, when students are asked more in depth questions in some of the categories, the limits of their knowledge were apparent. In this sense, these results are similar to other findings about both Americans' and Canadians' knowledge about Canada.

Our sample also allowed us to seek evidence about the development of knowledge of Canada in typical university classes in which one would expect Canadian content to come up and in which one would expect to find students interested in Canada. Based on comparisons across students in Political Science and French, as well as across students at different levels in each area, we found little evidence of any Canadian knowledge developed across levels of study. The only piece of information about Canada that may have been picked up by students of French was the hometown of Celine Dion. A significantly larger percentage of students of French knew this fact than did the students of Political Science. In short, these data suggest that if students are to learn about Canada, Canada needs to be explicitly integrated into the courses in the relevant areas because such knowledge was not found to be a by-product of study in Political Science or French.

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APPENDIX A

CANADA QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Please circle the ONE best answer for each of the following questions.

1. **The most popular sport in Canada is**
   a. baseball.
   b. basketball.
   c. football.
   d. hockey.

2. **Which countries belong to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)?**
   a. Canada and Mexico
   b. Mexico and the United States
   c. Canada, Mexico, and the United States
   d. Canada, the United States, and the European Union

3. **Canada is**
   a. the second largest trading partner with the US after China.
   b. the largest trading partner of the US.
   c. the country in NAFTA with which the US does the least trading.
   d. the second largest trading partner with the US after the European Union.

4. **Most of the natural gas to heat the homes of Iowans come from**
   a. Canada
   b. Saudi Arabia
   c. Mexico
   d. Texas

5. **How many provinces does Canada have?**
   a. 5
   b. 8
   c. 10
   d. 20

6. **The system of national government in Canada can best be described as a**
   a. parliamentary system.
   b. presidential system.
   c. unitary system.
   d. provincial system.

7. **The official language(s) of Canada is (are)**
   a. English and French.
   b. English, French, and Spanish.
   c. English, French, and Inuktitut.
   d. English only.

8. **Which statement is accurate about Canada's foreign and security policy?**
   a. Canada has never formally joined NATO.
   b. Canada is a member of the European Union.
   c. The Canadian government supported the American intervention in Iraq in 2003.
   d. The Canadian government supported the American action in Afghanistan in 2001.

9. **The political party with the largest number of seats in the Canadian Parliament is**
   a. the Conservative Party.
   b. the Liberal Party.
   c. the New Democratic Party.
   d. the Parti Quebecois.

10. **The population of Canada is**
    a. about half the size of the United States.
    b. about a tenth of the size of the United States.
    c. the same size as Mexico.
    d. twice the size of Mexico.

11. **The capital of Canada is**
    a. Vancouver.
    b. Montreal.
    c. Toronto.
    d. Ottawa.

12. **The singer Celine Dion is originally from**
    a. a small town near Winnipeg.
    b. a suburb of Chicago.
    c. a small town near Montreal.
    d. a suburb of Mexico City.

13. **The province of Quebec**
    a. has always been a French-ruled province throughout its history.
    b. has established French as its sole official language.
    c. has been officially identified as a "distinct society" by the Canadian government.
    d. has recently voted to secede from Canada in 2010.

14. **Which of the following provinces is directly north of Minnesota?**
    a. Alberta
    b. Saskatchewan
    c. Ontario
    d. Nova Scotia

15. **The border between the United States and Canada**
    a. has been undefended for almost two centuries, allowing the 9/11 hijackers to enter the United States unimpeded.
    b. has over $1 billion in commerce crossing it daily.
    c. has recently been fortified with a new electronic fence to increase security between the two countries
    d. is one of the few in the world that does not require any government documentation by individuals to cross it.

16. **The province in Canada with the greatest number of French-speaking residents is**
    a. Alberta
    b. Manitoba
    c. New Brunswick
    d. Quebec

17. **Which statement is correct about Canada's policy toward Afghanistan?**
    a. Canada currently has its military deployed to Afghanistan.
    b. Canada will be bringing its troops home from Afghanistan by the end of 2008.
    c. Canada has refused to recognize the current government of Afghanistan.
    d. Canada has provided no economic or military assistance to Afghanistan.

18. **The majority of Canadians live**
    a. within 200 miles of the Pacific Ocean.
    b. within 200 miles of the Atlantic Ocean.
    c. within 200 miles of the American border.
    d. within 200 miles of the Arctic Circle.

19. **The current Prime Minister of Canada is**
    a. Pierre Trudeau.
    b. Jean Chrétien.
    c. Paul Martin.
    d. Stephen Harper.

20. The nickname of Toronto's professional baseball team is:
a. the Cardinals.
b. the Orioles.
c. the Blue Jays.
d. the Canaries.

21. Which city is an important center of Canada's oil industry?
a. Calgary
b. Bozeman
c. Winnipeg
d. Thunder Bay

22. Halifax is the largest city in the province of
a. New Brunswick
b. Nova Scotia
c. British Columbia
d. Manitoba

23. In contrast to the United States, Canada
a. offers universal health coverage to its citizens
b. has no unemployment insurance for its citizens
c. requires compulsory voting in elections
d. has no standing army

24. Which is the newest territory that was established in Canada?
a. Northwest Territory
b. Yukon Territory
c. Nunavut
d. Prince Edward Island

25. The political leader most often associated with the "golden age" of Canadian diplomacy is
a. Lloyd Axworthy.
b. Lester Pearson.
c. Pierre Trudeau.
d. Tommy Douglas.

Background Information about the Respondents

26. What is your year in school?
a. Freshman
b. Sophomore
c. Junior
d. Senior

27. What state or country are you from? Please list.

_____

28. How many courses have you taken in Political Science that included Canadian content?
a. None (Go to Question 30)
b. One
c. Two
d. Three or more

29. If you have taken Political Science classes with Canadian content, what percentage of the course content was about Canada?
a. 1 percent
b. Less than 5 percent
c. 5 percent to 25 percent
d. More than 25 percent

30. Have you taken any university-level French language courses?
a. None (Go to Question 32)
b. One semester
c. Two semesters
d. Three semesters or more

31. If you have taken French classes, what percentage of the course content included Canada?
a. 1 percent
b. Less than 5 percent
c. 5 percent to 25 percent
d. More than 25 percent

32. In the past three months, how much media coverage have you seen about Canada?
a. None
b. One story
c. Two stories
d. Three or more stories

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