



## CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

**A**t the end of the school year, students enrolled in select Level III courses complete public examinations. This chapter will explore student performance on the June 2011 final examinations. District and gender differences will be described as well as five year trends in student performance.

When exploring student performance at the district level and over time, the range will be used to assess the variability of the average final mark and success rate. The range is a simple statistical measure calculated by subtracting the lowest score from the highest score between 2006/07 and 2009/10. If the scores are close together, the range is low meaning student performance has been consistent. This is what would be expected.

Results from the CSF are not included in the chapter due to the low number of students enrolled in public examination courses. In June 2011, students were enrolled in only four public examination courses: Mathématiques 3231, Biologie 3231, Historie Mondiale 3231 and English 3201. Two of these courses (Mathématiques 3231 and Biologie 3231) were only offered in the CSF. The number of students in each of these courses ranged from 5 to 10. Student performance in these subjects is provided in the tables found in appendix A. The CSF results are included in the provincial totals in this chapter.



### Student Performance (2010/11)

In the 2010/11 school year, 8,181 students across the province wrote 20,238 public examinations in 14 courses. For the purpose of this chapter, public examination courses are grouped into four subjects: mathematics, language, science and social studies.

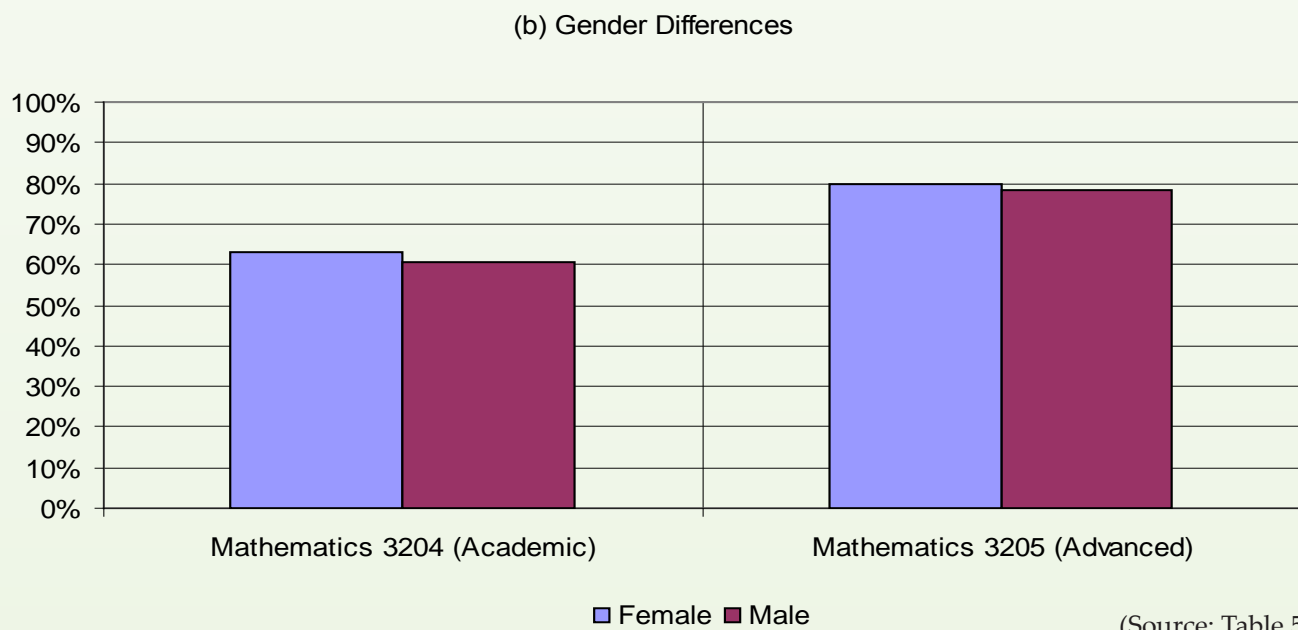
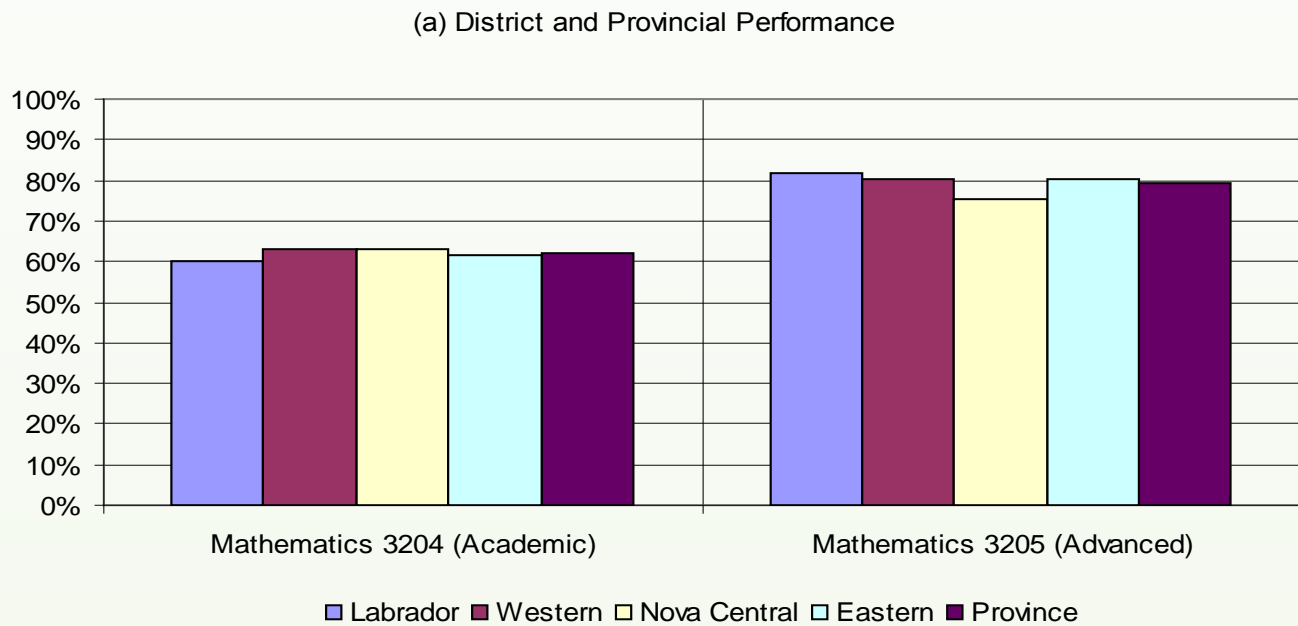
### Mathematics

Two mathematics courses had public examinations - Mathematics 3204 (Academic) and Mathematics 3205 (Advanced). As shown in figure 5.1a, final average course grades were fairly consistent across the four districts.

Final average grades in the advanced mathematics course tended to be higher than the academic mathematics course. The average grade in each of the districts ranged between 75.3% to 83.3% in Mathematics 3205 as compared to between 59.9% and 62.9% for Mathematics 3204. However, these differences must be interpreted with caution. Students who excel in mathematics or who plan on studying mathematics at the post-secondary level are typically encouraged to select advanced mathematics courses in high school rather than the academic mathematics courses. This may attribute to the higher course average seen in Mathematics 3205.

There was little gender difference present in the mathematics courses with between 1.3 and 2.7 points separating the female and male average grade (see figure 5.1b).

Figure 5.1: Student performance in mathematics (2010/11)



(Source: Table 5.1)







## Science

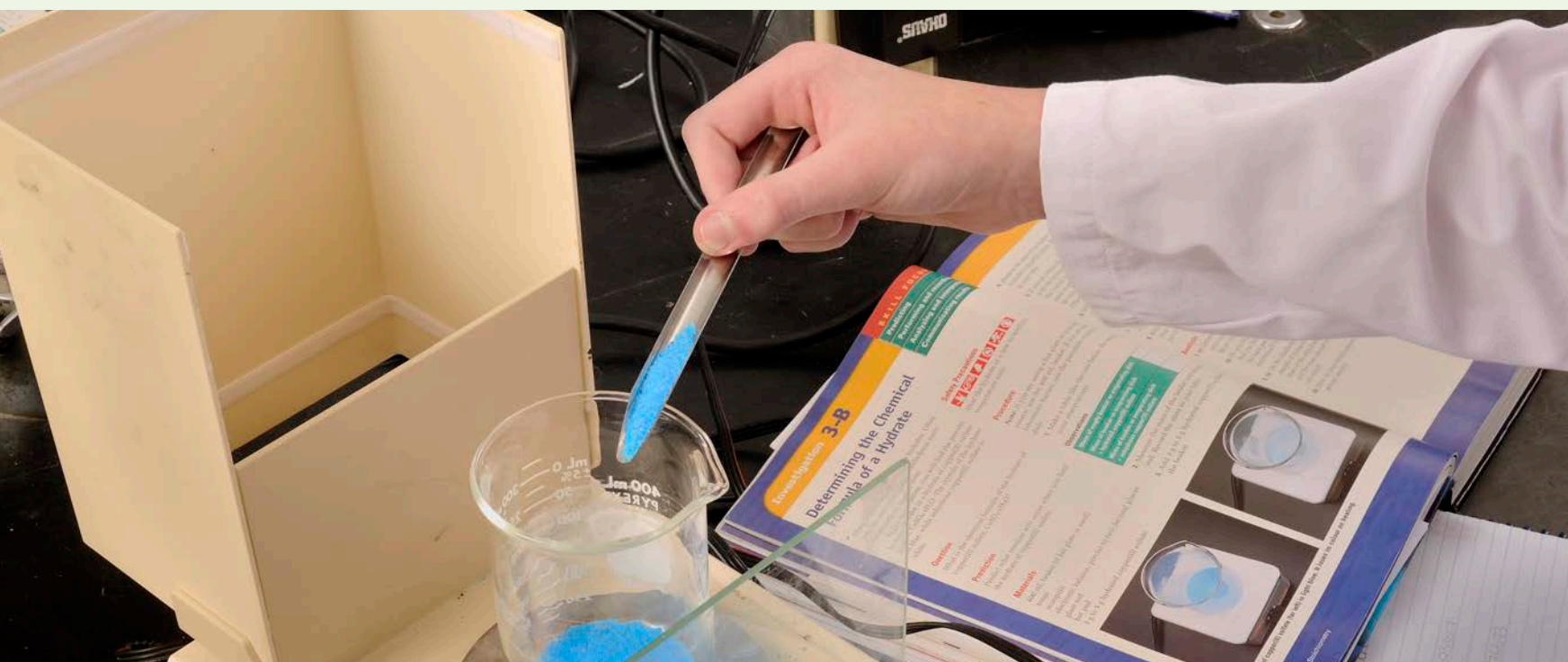
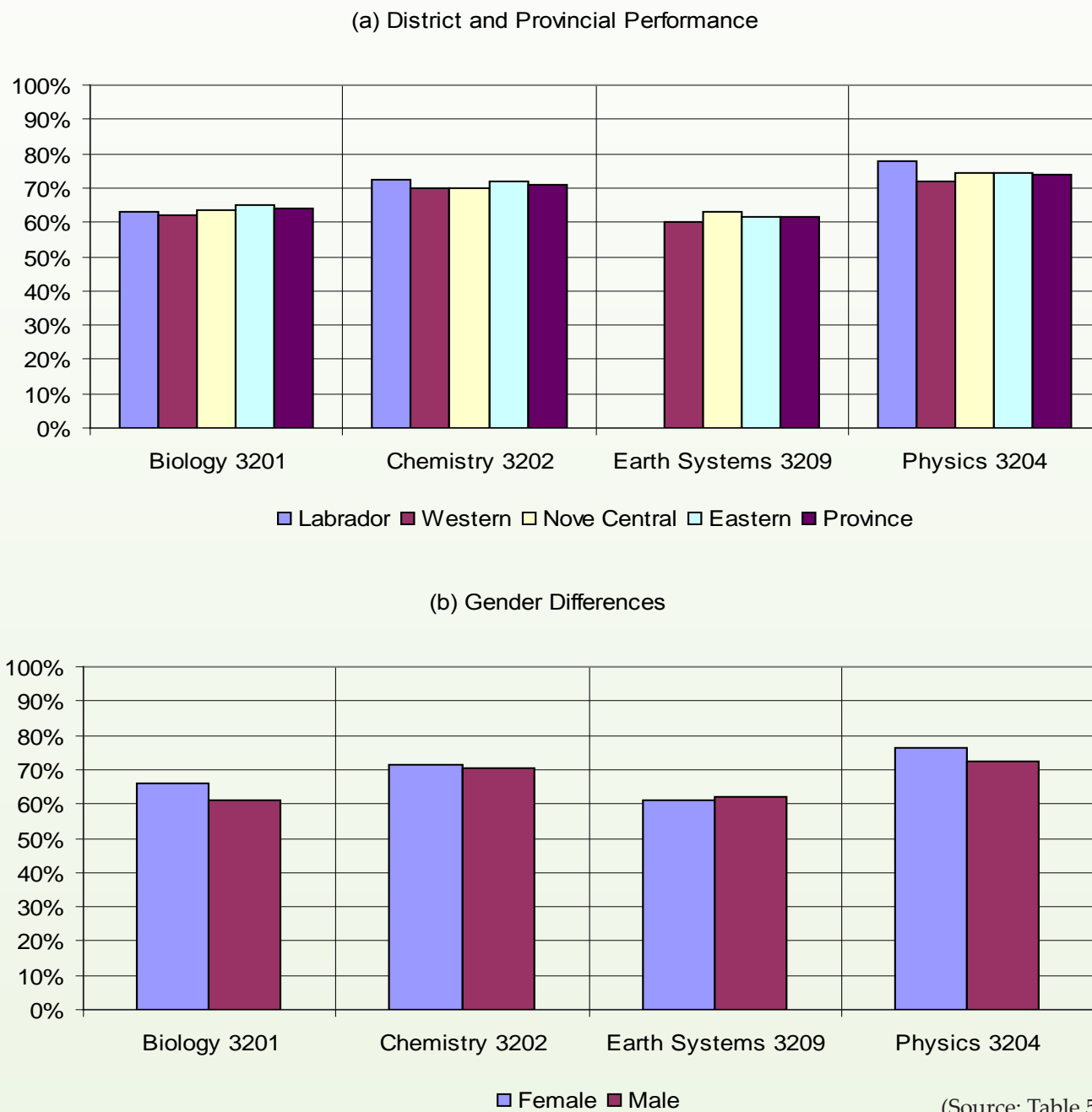
In 2010/11, four science courses had public examinations - Biology 3201, Chemistry 3202, Earth Systems 3209 and Physics 3204. No students in the Labrador School District wrote a public examination in Earth Systems 3209. Among these courses, the lowest average grade was found in Biology 3201 and Earth Systems 3209. In both these courses, the average grade was in the low to mid 60's. In the other two courses, the average grade was in the low to mid 70's (see figure 5.2a).

Overall, there was little variation across the districts with approximately 3.0 percentage points separating the highest and lowest average grades. There was somewhat more variation in the Physics 3204 average grade where 6.0 percentage points separated the highest (77.8% in the Labrador School District) and the lowest average grade (71.7% in the Western School District).

There was virtually no gender difference present in the average grades of females and males in Chemistry 3202 and Earth Systems 3209. In the other two courses, Biology 3201 and Physics 3204, the female average grade was between 4.0 and 5.0 points higher (see figure 5.2b).



Figure 5.2: Student performance in science (2010/11)





## Languages

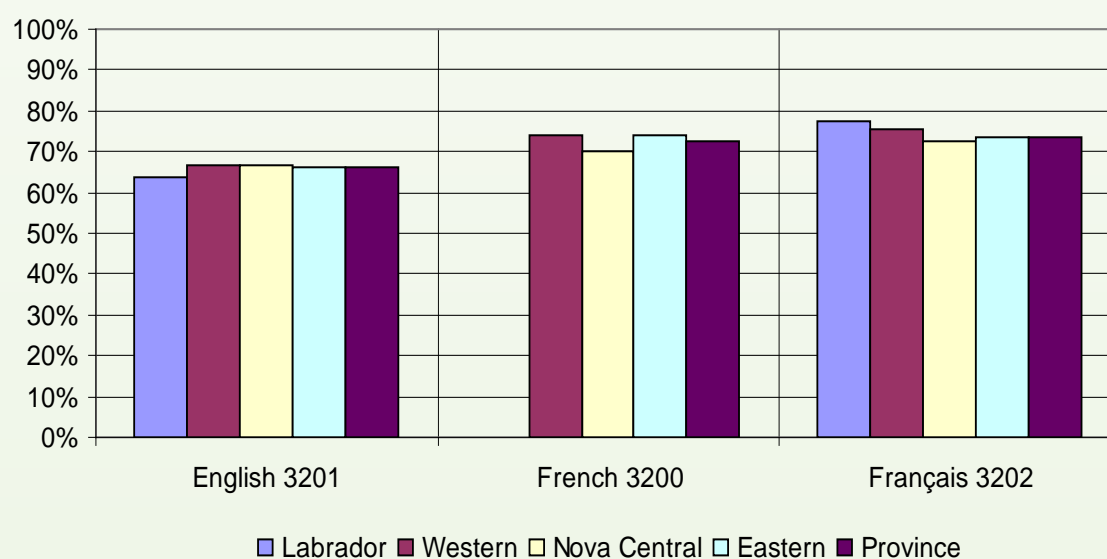
Three language courses had public examinations in 2010/11 – English 3201, French 3200 (Core) and Français 3202 (Immersion). There were no students in the Labrador School District who wrote the French 3200 (Core) public examination.

Overall, students performed slightly better in Français 3202 (Immersion) as compared to the other courses. At the district level, the average grade in Français 3202 (Immersion) ranged from 72.5% to 77.6% (see figure 5.3a). There was little variation in student performance across the four districts with only three and five points separating the highest and lowest average grades in each course.

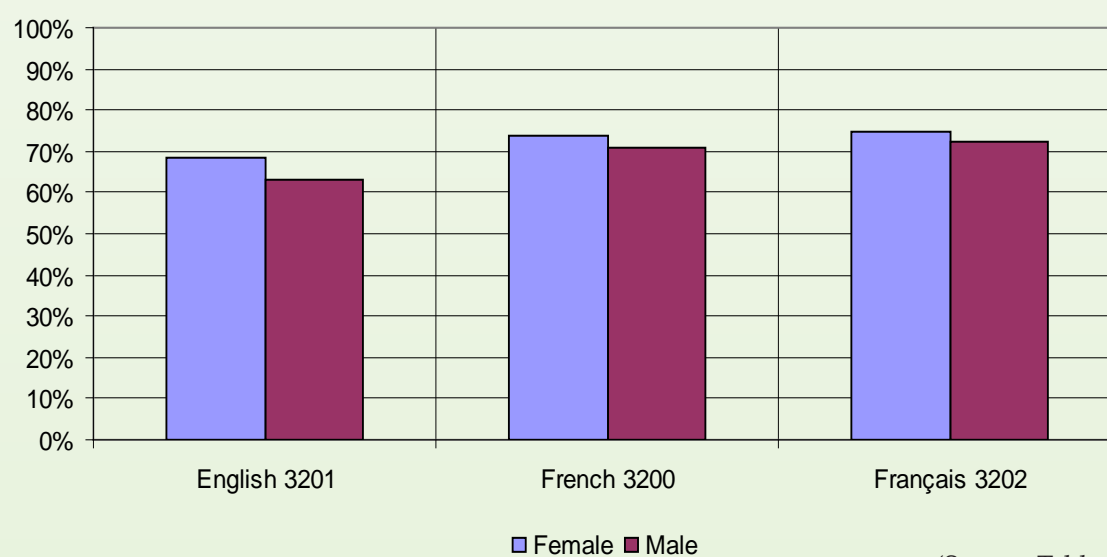
Along gender lines, the female average course grade was between 2.3 and 5.3 points higher than the male in each of the three language courses (see figure 5.3b).

**Figure 5.3: Student performance in language (2010/11)**

(a) District and Provincial Performance



(b) Gender differences



(Source: Table 5.3)

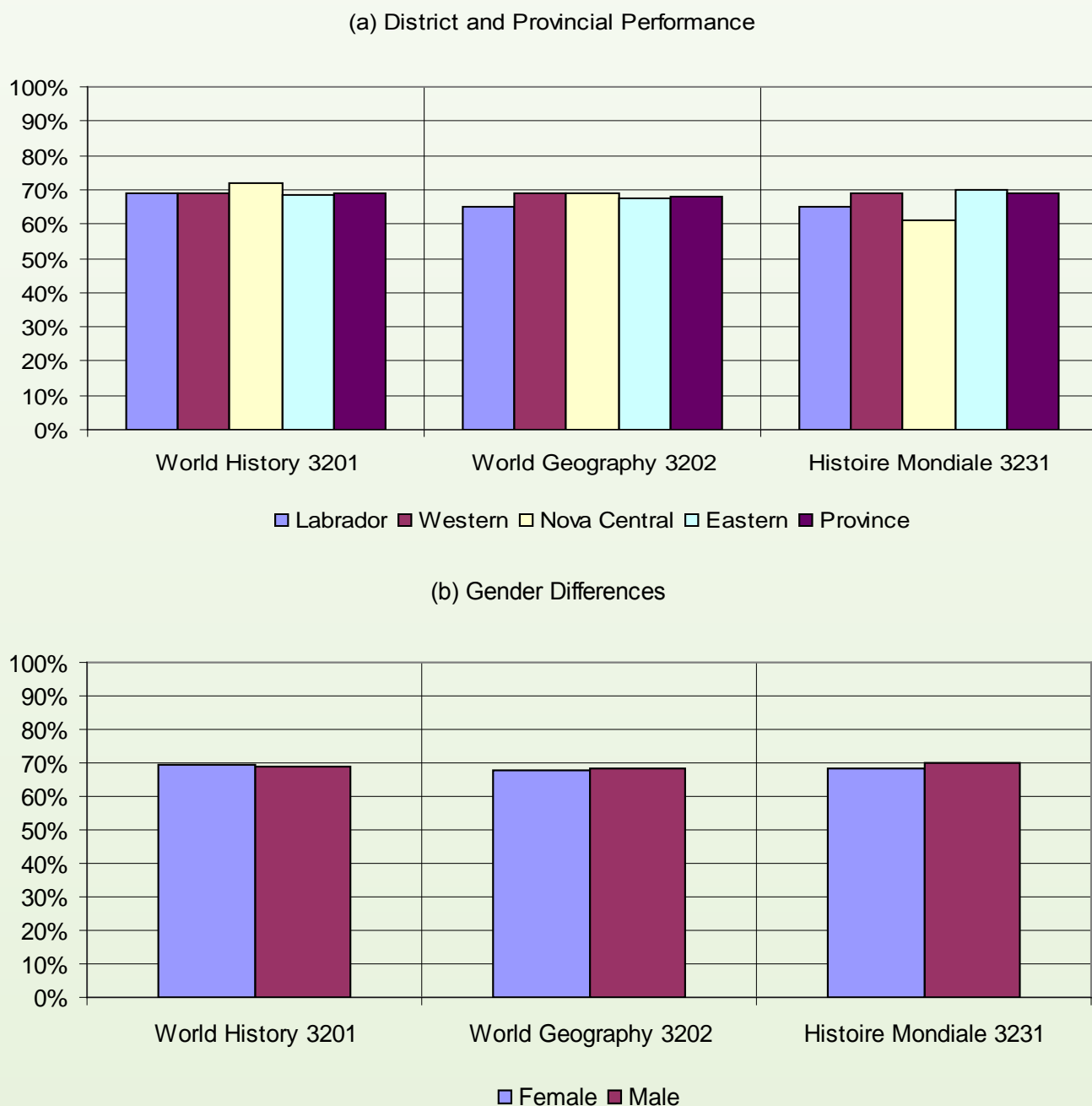


## Social studies

Public examinations occur in the three social studies courses: World History 3201, World Geography 3202 and Histoire mondiale 3231. Average grades in these courses tended to fall in the high 60's. There was little variation in the average grades across the districts in World History 3201 and World Geography 3202 with only 3.0 or 4.0 percentage points separating the highest and lowest grades. The average grade in Histoire mondiale 3231 was somewhat more varied with 8.9 points separating the highest (70.0% in the Eastern School District) and lowest (61.2% in the Nova Central School district) average grades (see figure 5.4a). However, this increased variability may be partially attributed to the low course enrolment in the districts. In the Eastern School District, 345 students wrote the public examination. In the other three school districts, the number of students enrolled ranged from 16 to 35.

The average final grade in the three social studies courses was similar for males and females with less than 2.0 percentage points separating them (see figure 5.4b).

**Figure 5.4: Student performance in social studies courses (2010/11)**



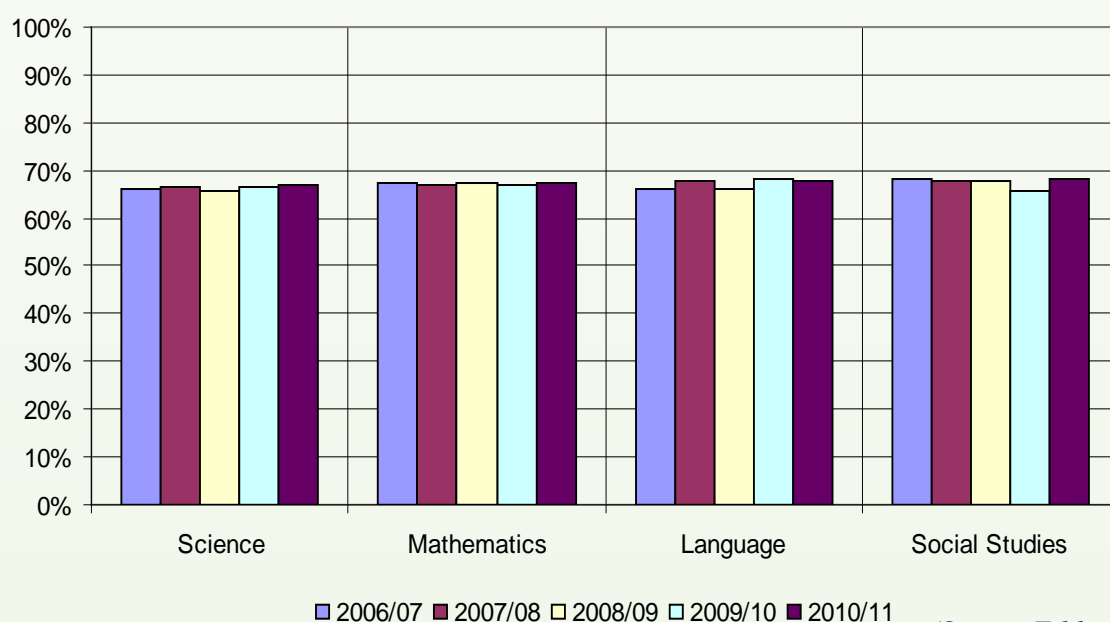
(Source: Table 5.4)



## Five Year Trends (2006/07-2010/11)

The following section will explore provincial trends in student performance on public examinations. Rather than discussing the results of each individual course, they are combined into the same four subjects used throughout this chapter: science, mathematics, language and social studies. Figure 5.5 presents average course grade in each subject over the past five years (i.e., between 2006/07 and 2010/11). Student performance has been quite consistent in each subject with between 0.7 and 2.6 points separating the highest and lowest average grades.

**Figure 5.5: Trends in student performance (2006/07-2010/11)**



(Source: Table 5.5)

