

ORIENTING STUDENT VETERANS TO THE LIBRARY: PILOTING A NEW MODEL OF LIBRARY ORIENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Student veterans and military service members are a unique population on college and university campuses. They are non-traditional students and often transfer students who can feel isolated among a large population of traditional students. As such, student veterans and service members are often better served by a tailored orientation approach. But getting student veterans and service members to attend a special library orientation can be difficult. Librarians and leaders of the campus veterans center were awarded an IMLS Sparks! grant aimed at developing a new model of library orientation for veterans. This new model builds on these students' prior knowledge by adapting the model used by the military to orient service members to new duty stations. This orientation model goes beyond a presentation or resource table to provide students with an orientation tailored to their needs and to facilitate exploration of the physical library space. This model also accommodates busy schedules and competing responsibilities by enabling student veterans and service members to complete their orientation on their own time.

NATIONAL NEED

The last ten years has seen a dramatic increase in the number of veterans and service members taking advantage of their educational benefits. The influx of student veterans on college campuses has led universities to consider veterans and military-affiliated students as an important and unique population on campus. As an underserved group in libraries as well as an academically at-risk group in higher education, student veterans are often unaware of modern changes in libraries and unfamiliar with the resources available to them in an academic library.

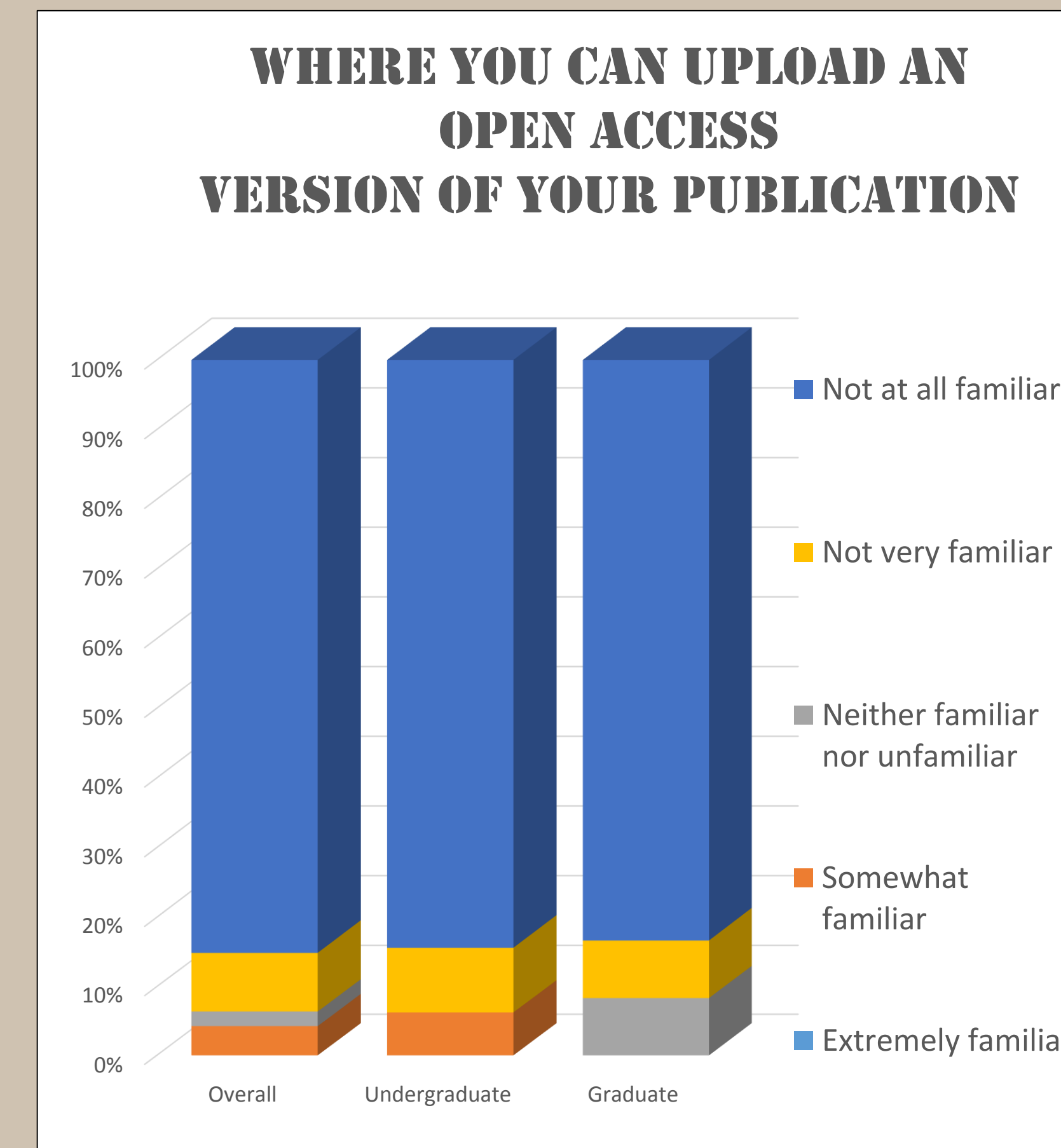
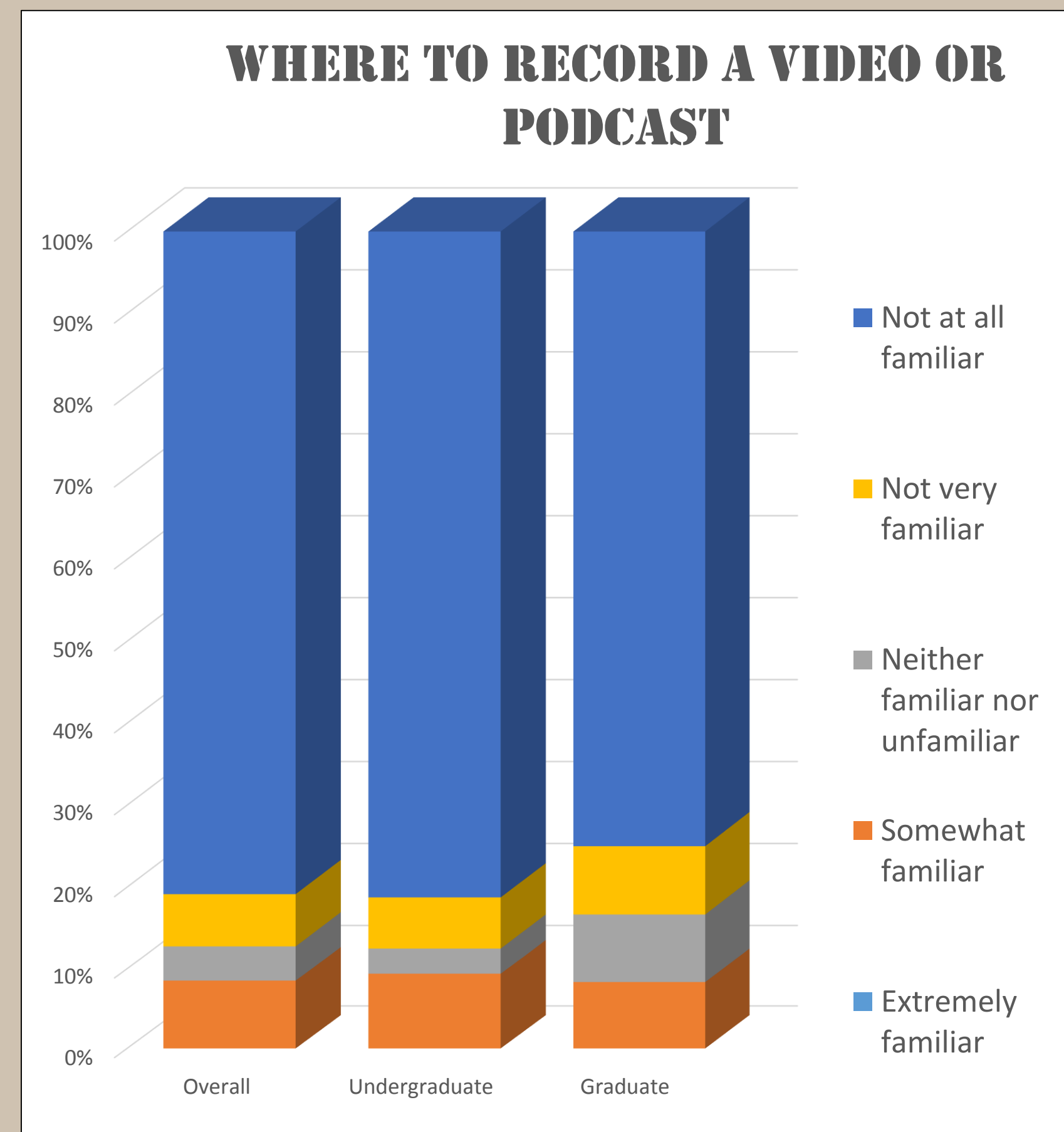
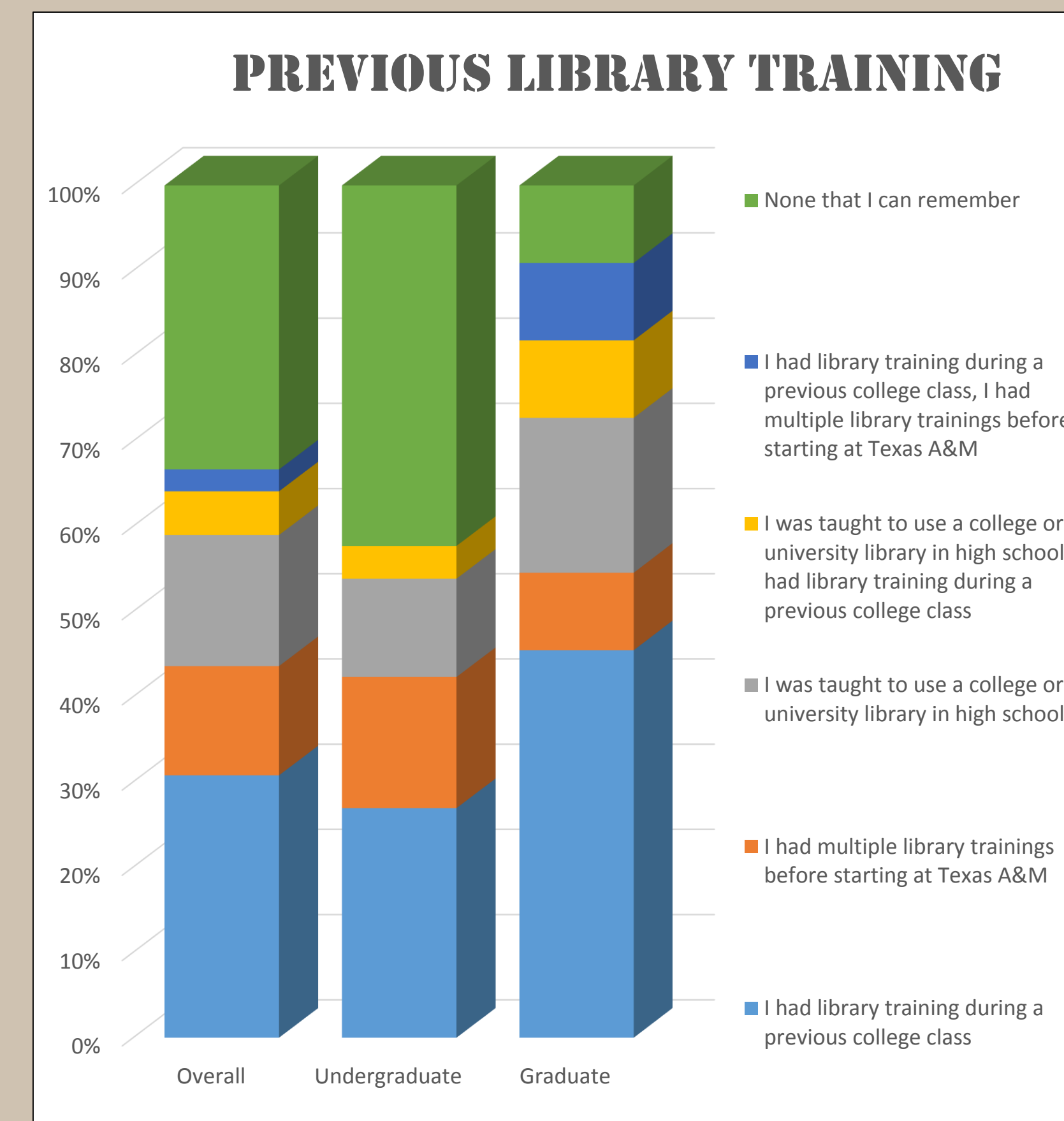
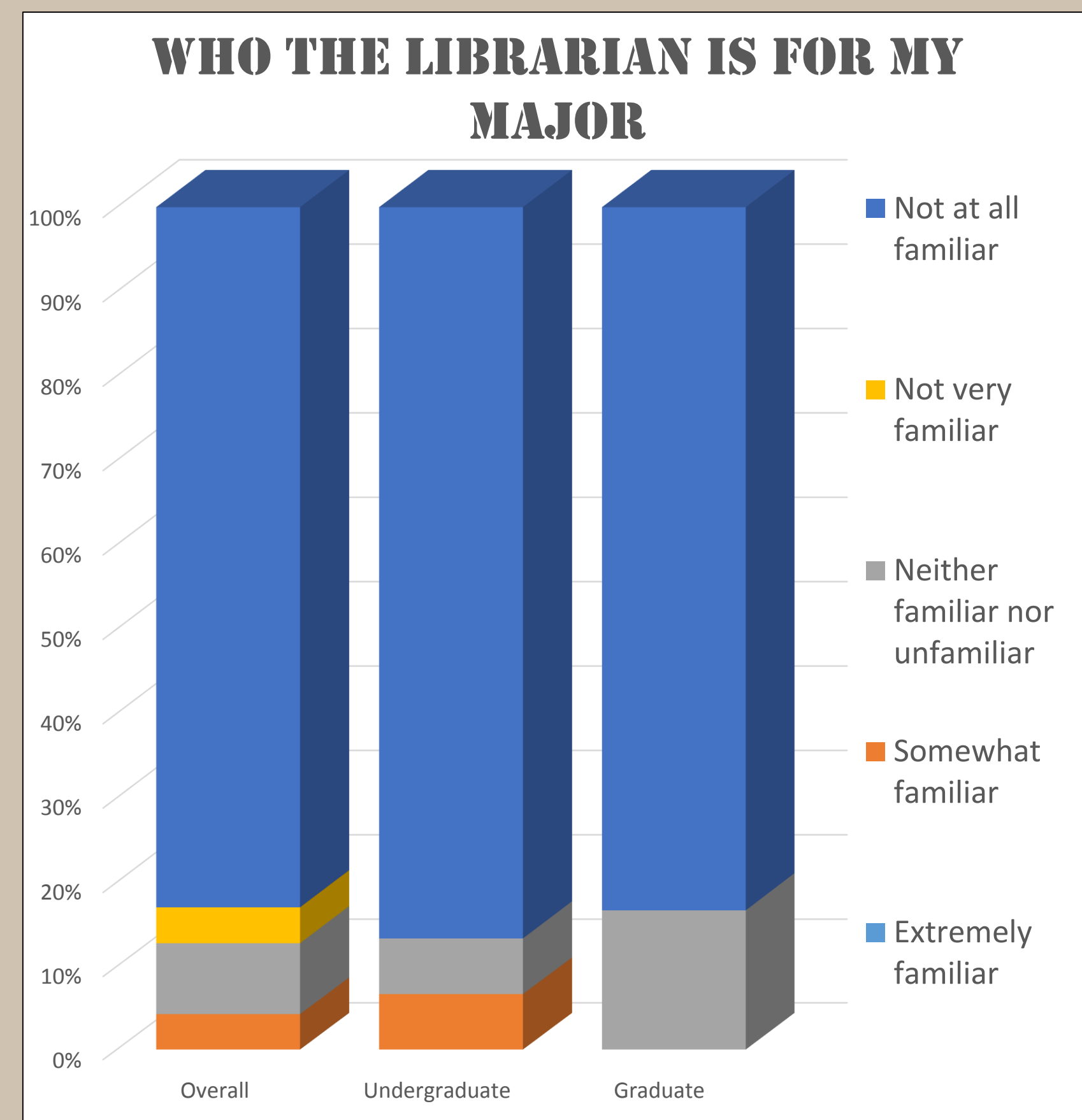
PROJECT DESIGN

The Texas A&M University Libraries, in collaboration with the campus Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC), are developing a library orientation model for student veterans that builds upon a structure familiar to them: the in-processing checklist (often referred to as the “dance card”). In the military, when arriving at a new installation, service members are provided a list of locations/offices they must visit to ensure that they are fully ready for service at the new installation. This project draws on that model to orient students to the library and has as its goals to:

- Goal 1: Reduce Library Anxiety
- Goal 2: Promote Library Collection Awareness
- Goal 3: Promote Library Service Awareness

This design – outreach goals with corresponding first-, second-, and third-tier learning outcomes – will incorporate technology and provide an effective assessment tool for librarians and VRSC personnel. The app-based platform will be self-directed, include a pre-assessment, and provide students a tailored “dance card” for potential multiple iterations of the activity.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT



NEXT STEPS

After gathering data from current student veterans, our next step is building the modules and tutorials that will form the “dance card” orientation. Modules will be built using a variety of software suited for the learning outcomes for each module. For example, a virtual tour of the five libraries on campus will use a narrated slideshow format. When student veterans visit one of the libraries, they will engage with an augmented reality tour of the space. Finally, some of the modules will use interactive tutorial software such as Storyline Articulate to create some videos of how to search the library discovery layer or navigate library resources.

Once all the modules are completed, they will be loaded in a Blackboard course shell for user testing by volunteers that have identified as student veterans. Feedback will be used to update the modules before the start of the fall semester. A volunteer group will pilot that application during the fall 2018 semester and assessment will determine if additional changes need to be made before the full scale launch in spring of 2019.



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