

Teaching journalism in the time of COVID-19: impacts on pedagogy and practice

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Background on the Canadian Context

- Post-secondary institutions in Canada work on a semester system: winter semester ends late April/May.
- Instruction moved online mid-March.
- Most institutions had digital a learning platform, but not all instructors used it.
- When classes shifted online, instructors had a week or less to prepare to finish the term.

Our Survey

- We focused on the emergency shift to online classes.
- Two-four weeks of online only classes for students.
- Survey sent to journalism educators at 42 Canadian post-secondary institutions.
- Included French and English: Diploma, Certificate, Bachelors and Masters programs.
- 312 invitations, 42 responses = response rate of 13.5%.
- Low survey engagement is a limitation of the data.

Our Survey- Three Main Areas of Interest

- **Expectations** for students before and during COVID-19 distance learning.
- **Observations** on how teaching online due to physical distancing affected the quality of student work.
- **Looking ahead** to things to consider and changes that might stick.

Survey Question: What is expected of students normally

Cover events and meetings in person (as eyewitnesses)

Interview sources in person

Interview a set number of sources

Avoid interviewing family members or friends

Avoid putting themselves in their stories

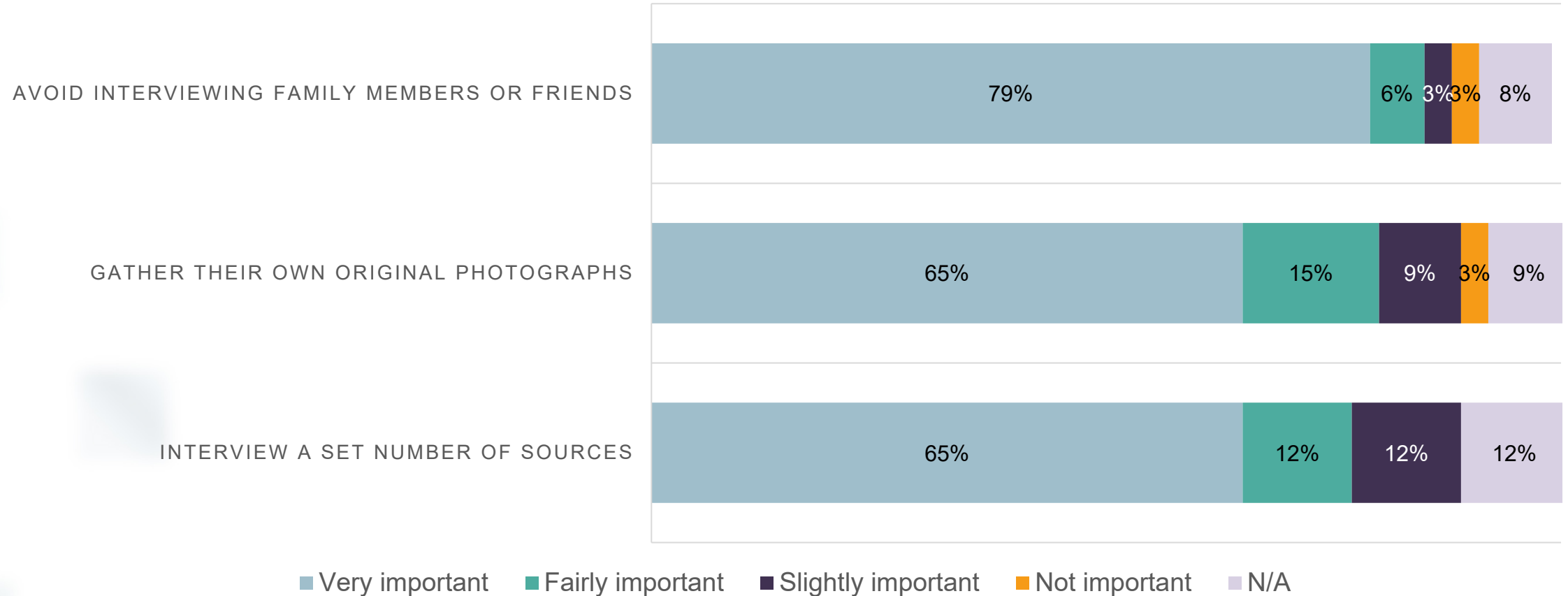
Gather their own original audio

Gather their own original video

Gather their own original photographs

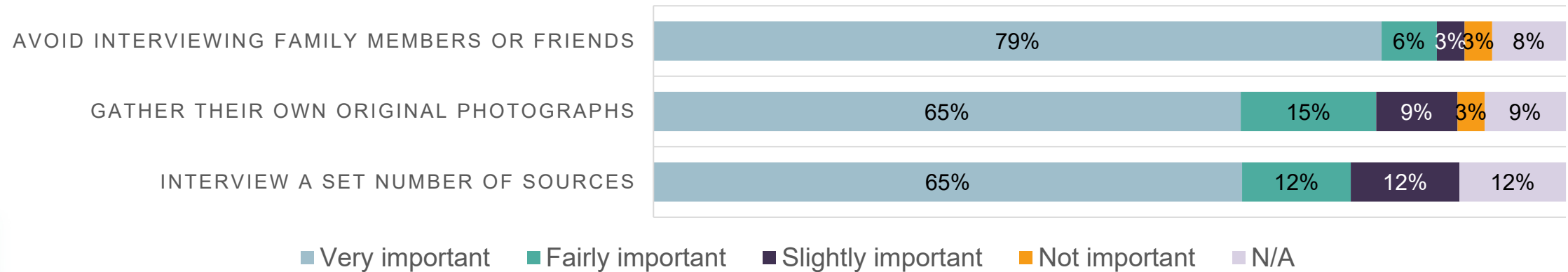
Survey Results: Expectations of Students

BEFORE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

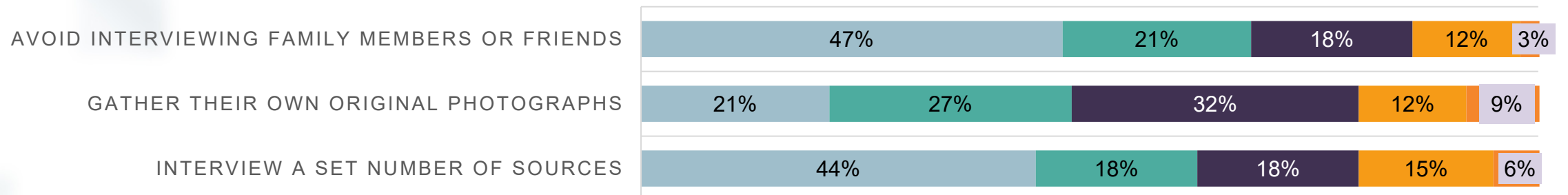


Survey Results: Expectations of Students

BEFORE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS



AFTER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS



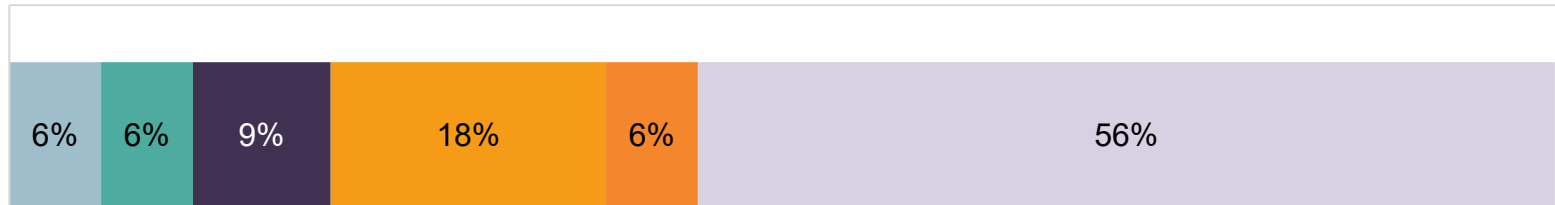
To consider for future distance learning journalism education

How important is it that students adhere to the traditional expectations in terms of information gathering, and could that learning be done in another way?

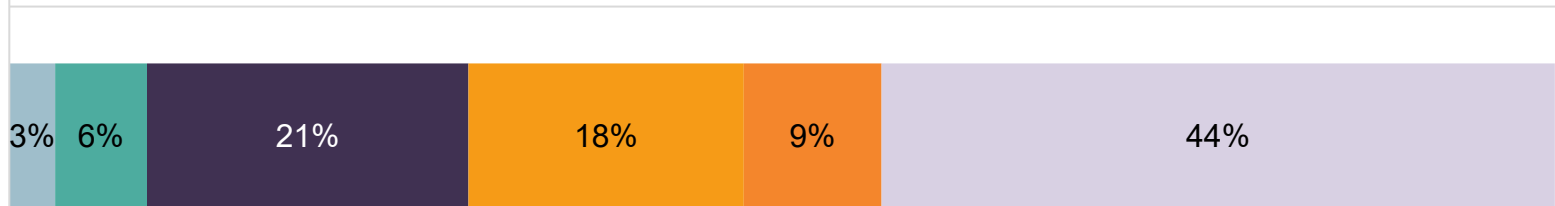
Survey Results: Drop in Editorial Quality in Individual Reporting

■ Much better ■ Somewhat better ■ Stayed the same ■ Somewhat worse ■ Much worse ■ N/A

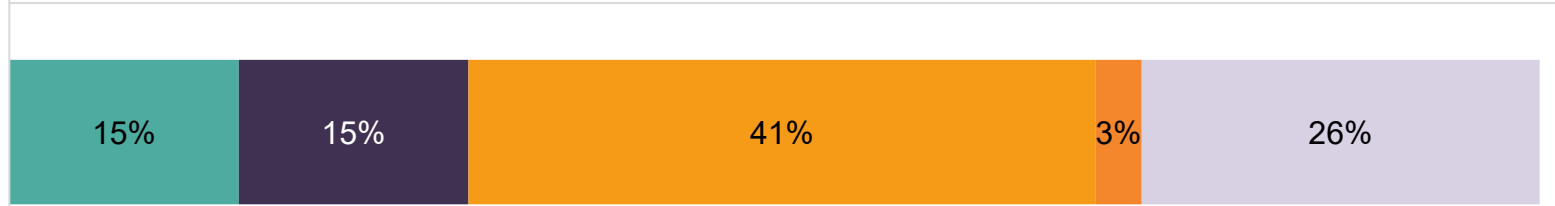
DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS



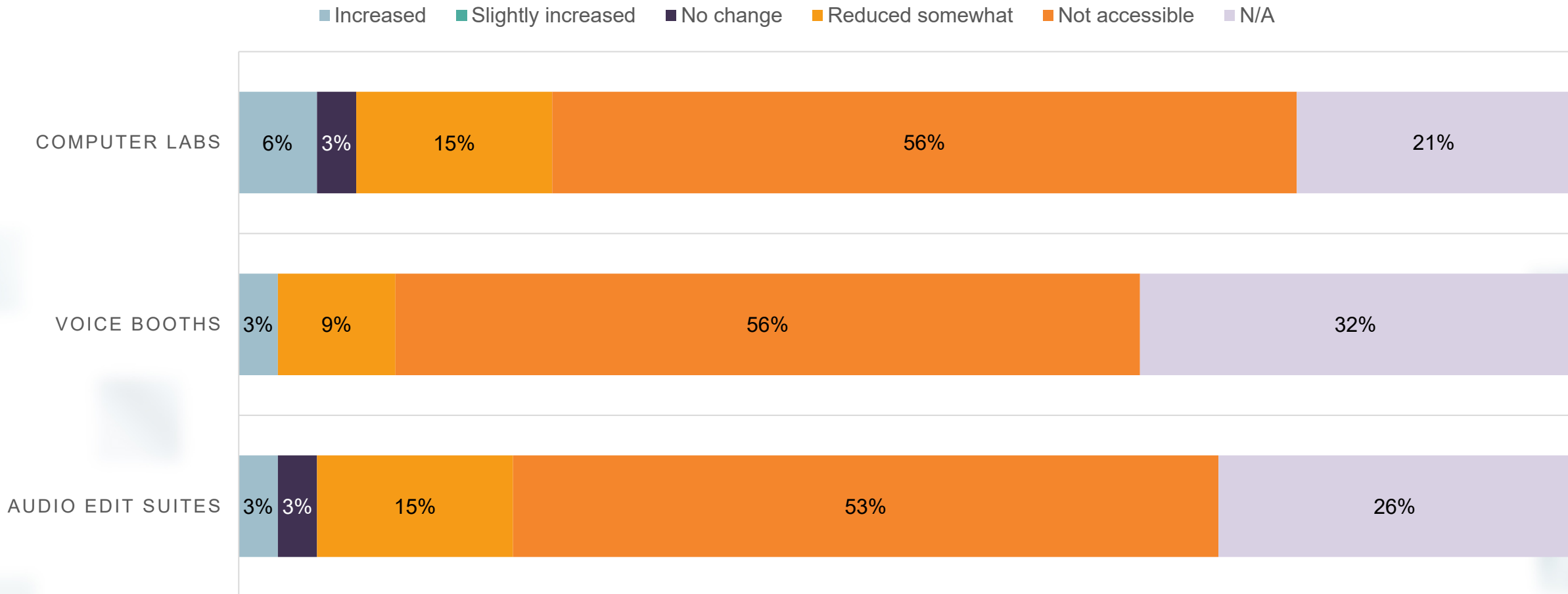
GROUP WORK



INDIVIDUAL REPORTING ASSIGNMENTS

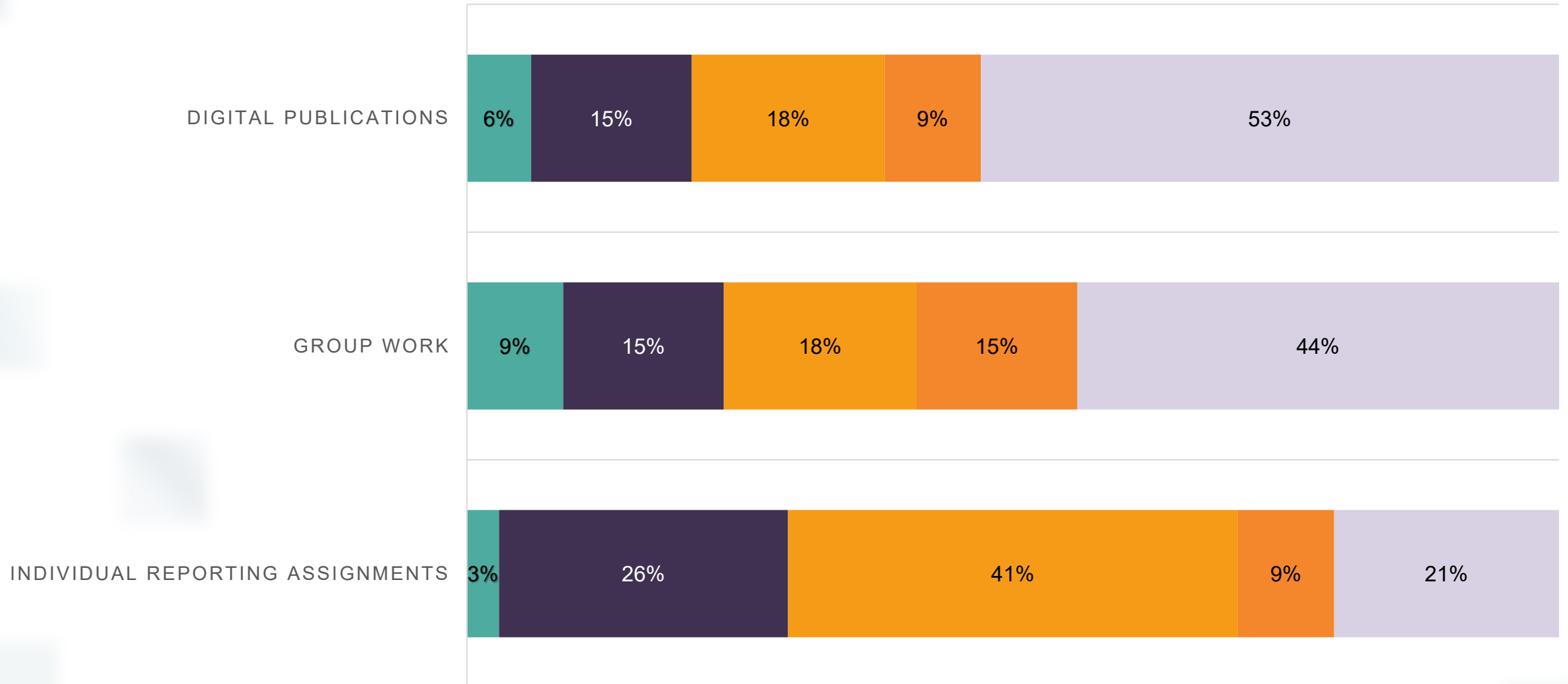


Survey Results: Drop in Student Access to Technology



Survey Results: Drop in Technical Quality of Individual Reporting

■ Somewhat better ■ Stayed the same ■ Somewhat worse ■ Much worse ■ N/A



To consider for future distance learning journalism education

How can journalism assignments be adjusted for online learning without losing editorial and technical quality?

What on-the-ground realities need to be considered?

Looking Forward: Some changes will be kept

- Approaching student work with more flexibility including:
 - good communication,
 - more relaxed deadlines,
 - adjustments to traditional reporting methodologies.
- Teaching remote interviewing techniques.
- Utilization of various online components of lesson delivery and student group work.

Looking Forward: Some changes had a perceived negative impact

- The loss of face-to-face feedback and meetings with instructors.
- The lack of access to technology and labs.
- Internships and work placements were not completed or did not happen.

Areas for future research

- Follow up and qualitative interviews to see how instructors changed their courses for this year in a non-emergency setting.
- We may do a course outline comparison, to see what has changed from last year when there were no restrictions, to this year.
- A study of student perceptions of online learning with a focus on students who were already in a journalism program.

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