



HUMANITIES INSTRUCTORS’ PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES ON INTEGRATING VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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INTRODUCTION

Virtual Reality (VR) has gained traction in STEM fields, but its integration into humanities education remains underexplored. This study investigates how humanities instructors at Utah Valley University (UVU) perceive VR, their readiness to adopt it, and how professional development (PD) can address gaps in awareness, training, and confidence.

Research Questions:

- RQ 1- What are the humanities instructors’ perceptions of VR in education, and how can professional development address their concerns and misconceptions?
- RQ 2- What are the attitudes/techniques of instructors already using VR, and how can these insights enhance professional development for faculty new to VR?
- RQ 3- What is the overall readiness of the humanities faculty to integrate VR, and how can professional development increase their preparedness and confidence?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the growing interest in immersive learning, UVU humanities faculty lacked structured support or training to implement VR. Many held misconceptions or skepticism, and technical or institutional limitations hindered adoption. This study seeks to bridge the gap through a targeted PD experience rooted in constructivism and andragogical principles.

METHODS

Design: Exploratory qualitative study with mixed-methods data collection.

Participants: 15 faculty members from UVU’s humanities department completed a pre-survey, 5 joined the PD program, 3 completed it.

PD Format: 3-week, self-paced Canvas course with video content, readings, discussion forums, and a hands-on VR lab session.

Frameworks: Constructivism and Andragogy.

Data: Pre/post surveys, open-ended responses, thematic coding.



The study concludes that **Humanities instructors** should be equipped with **structured professional development (PD)** programs to **bridge** the gap in **Virtual Reality (VR) misperceptions, attitudes, and readiness** to **integrate VR to enhance student learning** through immersive experiences.

RESULTS

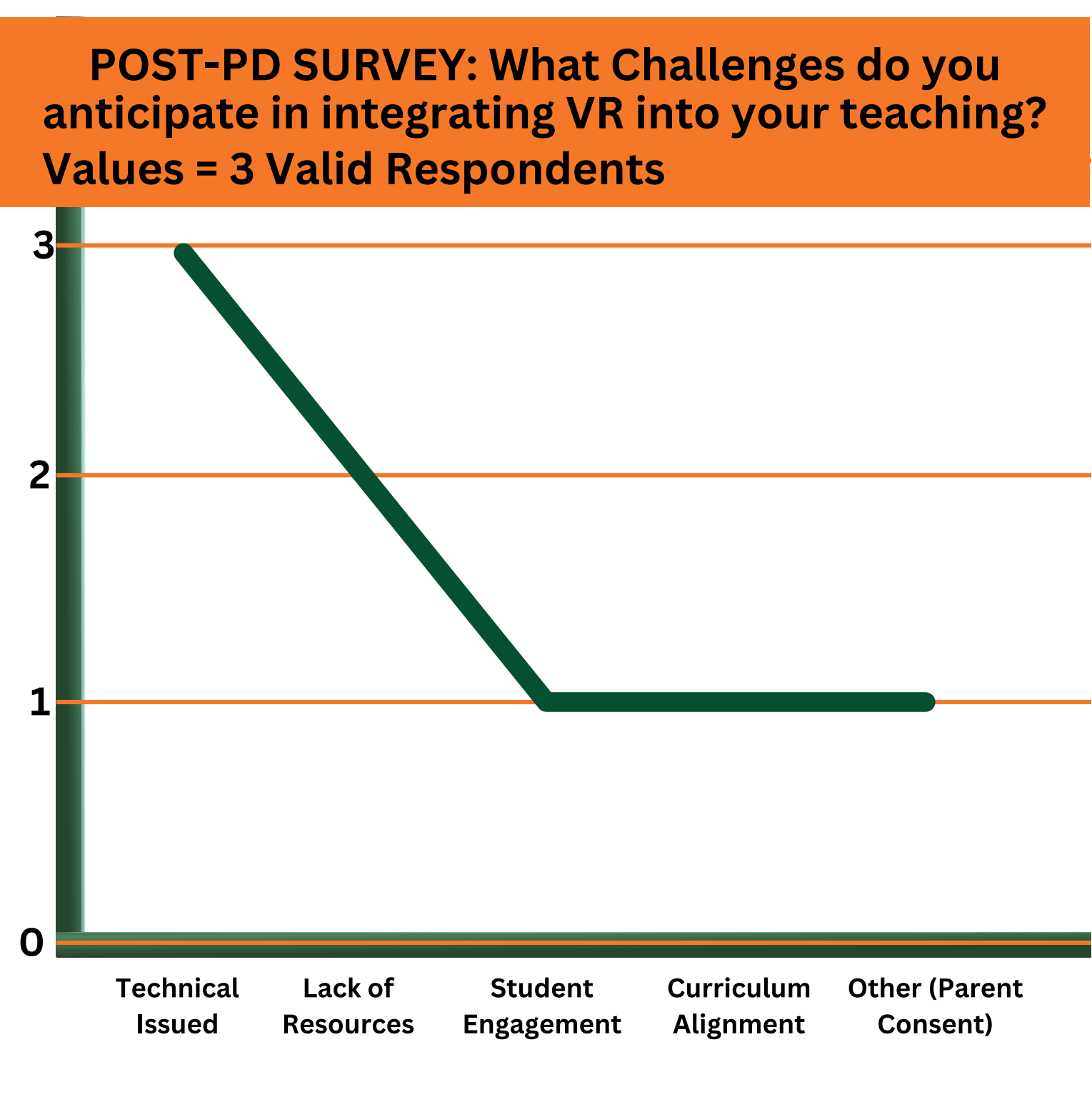
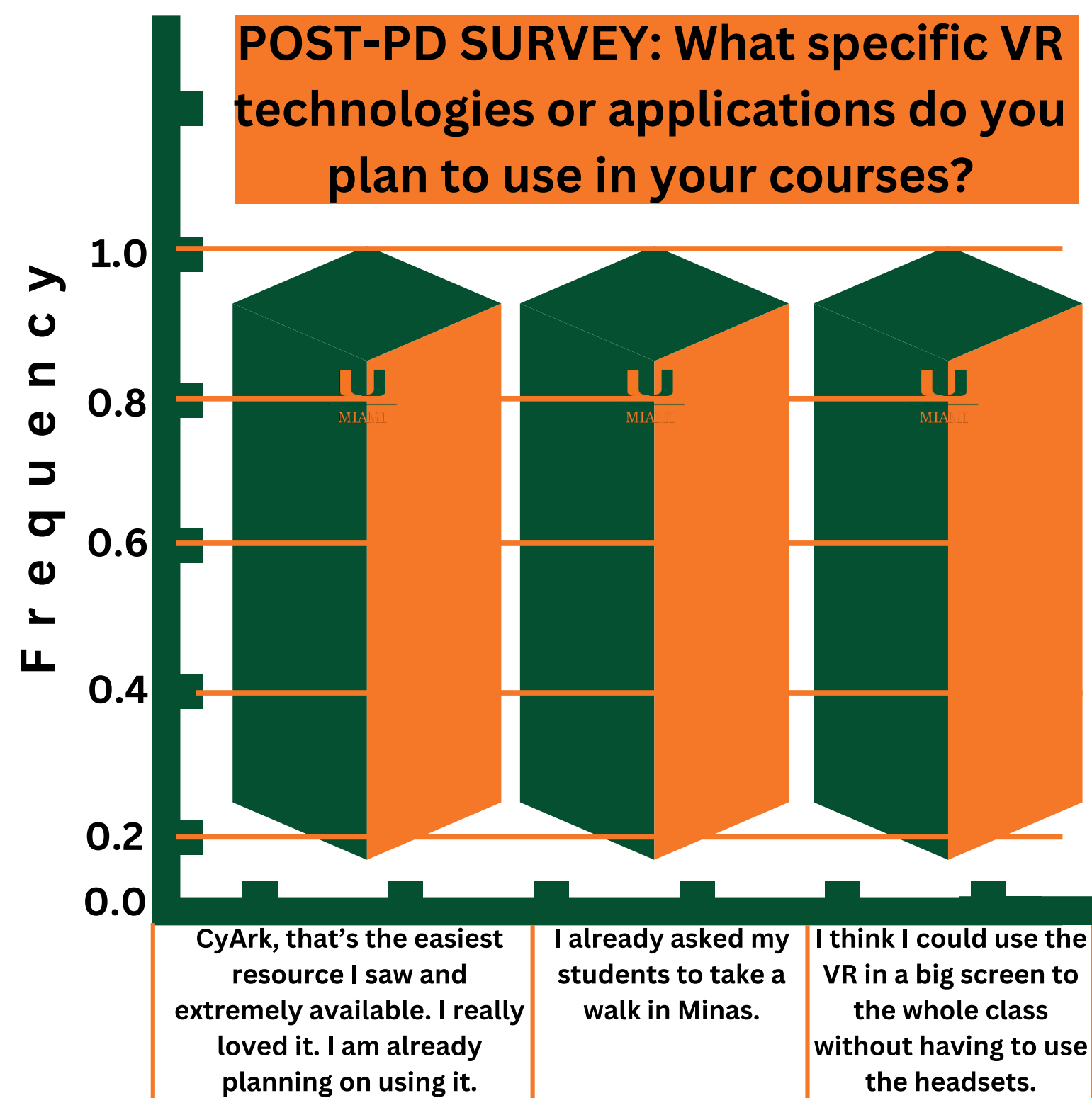
Pre-Survey:

- 6 had never used VR; concerns included motion sickness, tech barriers, and limited institutional support.
- Only 3 expressed initial interest in using VR in their courses.

Post-Survey:

- Increased confidence and interest after training.
- Participants appreciated peer collaboration, VR resources, and hands-on lab experiences.
- 2 out of 3 began planning or implementing VR-enhanced lessons (e.g., virtual tours of Brazil and Portugal).

POST-PD SURVEY: WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN PERCEPTIONS ON INTEGRATING VR INTO YOUR COURSE AFTER THE WORKSHOP?			Frequency
Valid	I believe that understanding better what VR is helped me see ways of using it in the course		1
	Pros: a lot of student engagement and connection to real life. A much cheaper way to "take" my students to places that are a huge part of my curriculum.		1
	Pros: Provides Outstanding Visualizations That Aren't Possible In The Traditional Classroom; Creates Interest; Doesn't Feel Like Work; Eliminates The Language Barrier, among other things. Cons: Deteriorates Human Connections; Functionality Issues; Addiction To The Virtual World; not all schools will have budget to invest in VR		1
	Total		3



DISCUSSION

Humanities instructors hold varying attitudes about VR, shaped by experience, support, and familiarity. Structured, hands-on PD programs helped shift perceptions and empowered faculty to explore immersive, student-centered approaches. However, institutional support (technical, financial, pedagogical) is essential for sustainable integration.

CONCLUSION

Structured PD can bridge gaps in VR readiness, reduce misconceptions, and help faculty unlock the transformative potential of immersive learning in the humanities.

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