

# ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ONLINE LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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- WILU is taking place on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the 'Dish with One Spoon' wampum agreement.
- I am coming from the unceded territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

# AGENDA

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Accessibility and Teaching

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UCW Library's Instruction

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Tools for Accessible Teaching

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Accessibility Challenges

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Recommendations

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Future Plans

# ACCESSIBILITY AND TEACHING



# ACCESSIBILITY AND TEACHING

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- Accessibility: Creating spaces, services, etc. that can be used by everyone.
- Accessible instruction applies to space, lesson design, delivery, activities, and learning resources.
- In person vs. online teaching has some overlap and some differences.



# UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

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- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is about flexibility and learner agency in order to best serve the learning needs of diverse students.
- UDL focuses on designing multiple means of:
- Engagement: Appeal to learners' interests and identities.
- Representation: Provide varied ways to access information.
- Action and Expression: Provide varied ways to act on and express what they know.



# UDL AND LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

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- Students may be expected to inform their instructor about accessibility needs.
- There may be barriers for doing so, and librarians may not be aware of these requirements.



# ACCESSIBILITY AND ONLINE INSTRUCTION

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Several things to consider:

- Visual and audio accessibility: screen reader compatibility, alt text, volume and clarity, captions, information on slides.

UDL Guidelines:

- Representation: digital handouts, recordings, self-guided versions.
- Engagement: Use relevant examples, explain terms.
- Action and expression: provide options for participation, allow responses in multiple forms.





# LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AT UNIVERSITY CANADA WEST

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# UCW STUDENTS

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- The biggest program is the MBA.
- Other programs: *BA in business communication, Bachelor of Commerce, and AA*
- Students are primarily International students.

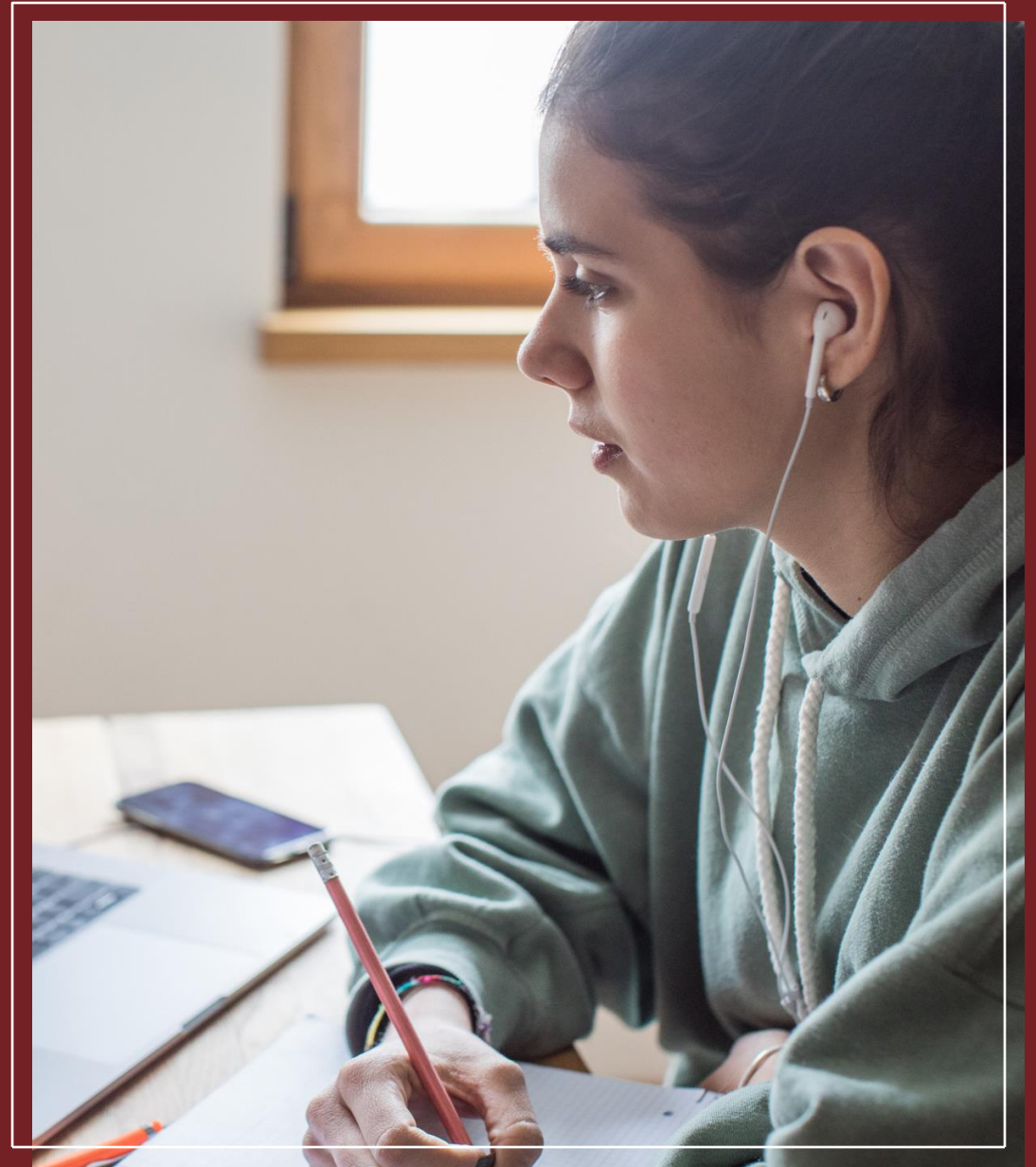




# UCW LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

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- Library instruction moved online in 2020.
- All teaching is through Microsoft Teams.
- Workshops on research skills, industry and data research, and APA citations.
- Moving from drop-in to in class sessions.
- Both full time and part time/student librarians teach.

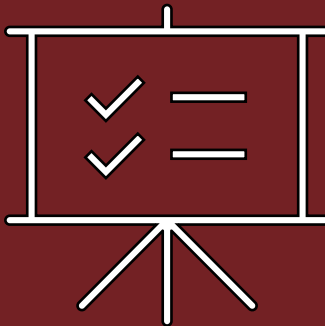


# TOOLS AND SUPPORTS FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION: MICROSOFT

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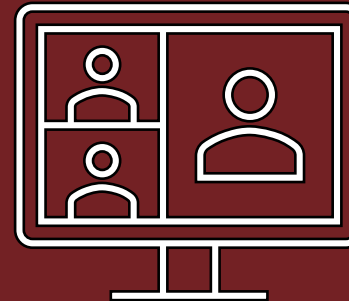
## Powerpoint

- Accessible templates
- Accessibility checker
- Create accessible PDF
- Built-in screen reader (Narrator)



## Teams

- Live captions
- Recording and Transcription
- Magnifying shared screen



# TOOLS AND SUPPORTS FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION: OTHER TOOLS

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## Nearpod

- Interactive presentations, synchronous and asynchronous options.
- Slides are screen reader friendly, but activities are not.
- PDFs can be embedded.
  - Used include handouts in workshops.

# TOOLS AND SUPPORTS FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION: OTHER TOOLS

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## Canva

- Accessibility checker reviews typography, colour contrast, and alt text.
- Alt text has character limit.

## Adobe Acrobat Pro

- 'Prepare for accessibility' and accessibility checker tools
- Checks for screen reader accessibility, reading order, titling, colour contrast, accessible links, alt text, etc.

# ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES





# BARRIERS TO ONLINE INSTRUCTION

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Rebeca Peacock (2025) identified barriers to online library instruction:

- Lack of support and time to learn instructional technology and design.
- Lack of access to technology.
- Undervaluing of library instruction
- Lack of time to develop online teaching resources.
- Negative views of online learning and lack of motivation from students.

# ACCESSIBILITY CHALLENGES AT UCW



- Platforms and programs have limitations to their uses.
- University-produced Powerpoint templates are not always accessible and take extra work to make accessible.
- Familiarity with accessibility tools and practices isn't consistent.
- In class workshops depend on the instructor's setup.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



# PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

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- Explore and use the tools in the programs and platforms you're already using.
- Build accessibility into your workshops from the beginning.
- Create resources to help colleagues.
- If your institution has an accessibility office, work with them.
- Provide PDFs of workshop slides or handouts, recordings of sessions, or other alternative ways to access the information.

## FUTURE PLANS: SHORT TERM

1. Integrating accessibility and UDL into workshop creation and updating procedures.
2. Create documentation and training for accessibility features.

## LONG TERM

Create a system of review by people with lived experiences and expertise.

# CITATIONS

Cast (2024). The UDL Guidelines. <https://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Cast (n.d.). Universal Design for Learning. <https://www.cast.org/what-we-do/universal-design-for-learning/>

Peacock, R. (2025). Barriers to online library instruction in academic libraries: A qualitative study. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 51(2), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2025.103021>

Pionke, J., & Rutledge, L. (2021). Using Universal Design for Instruction to Make Library Instruction Accessible. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 59(2), 161-164.

THANK YOU



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