

Nuts and Bolts: Inclusive Library Instructional Practices Using Universal Design Learning (UDL) Guidelines

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ABSTRACT

Librarians face challenges in designing and creating inclusive learning environment for students who are diverse not only in terms of age, race, gender, (dis)Ability, ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, but they are also different in the ways of how they learn.

At the University of Maryland – College Park, librarians, teaching faculty and instructional designers are working together to create accessible content for eLearning and to reach out to a wider population of learners using recent technological tools and existing university’s content management infrastructure. Digital technologies, online resources, and mobile devices coupled with the guiding principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework and the University of Maryland (UMD) Web Accessibility Guidelines allowed us to tailor our instructional practices to create an inclusive and accessible learning environment for every student. We incorporated various tools and resources to achieve the learning objectives set up for our library instruction classes.

In this poster, we will provide practical tips and tricks for applying the UDL framework and web accessibility principles into our instruction efforts.

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DEFINITION OF UDL

“UDL is a **framework** to think about how different tools and resources can be leveraged **to reduce barriers** and support **all learners** to engage in challenging ways of **thinking.**” (CAST, 2018)

“UDL aims to change the design of the environment rather than to change the learner.” (CAST, 2018)

PRINCIPLES OF UDL

- **Flexibility** – platform (ELMS, LibGuides, print handouts), means of instruction (in the classroom, distance via WebEx, in-person consultations)
- **Simple and intuitive instruction** – avoid too much text, provide clear simple instructions
- **Multiple means of presentation** – textual, video, audio
- **Success oriented curriculum** – provide activities in the classroom that lead to problem-solving
- **Appropriate level of student effort** – think of multiple ways of engaging students with different abilities to process information
- **Appropriate environment for learning** – choose a variety of activities to accommodate the diverse students in your classroom

TOOLS FOR ACTIVE LEARNING

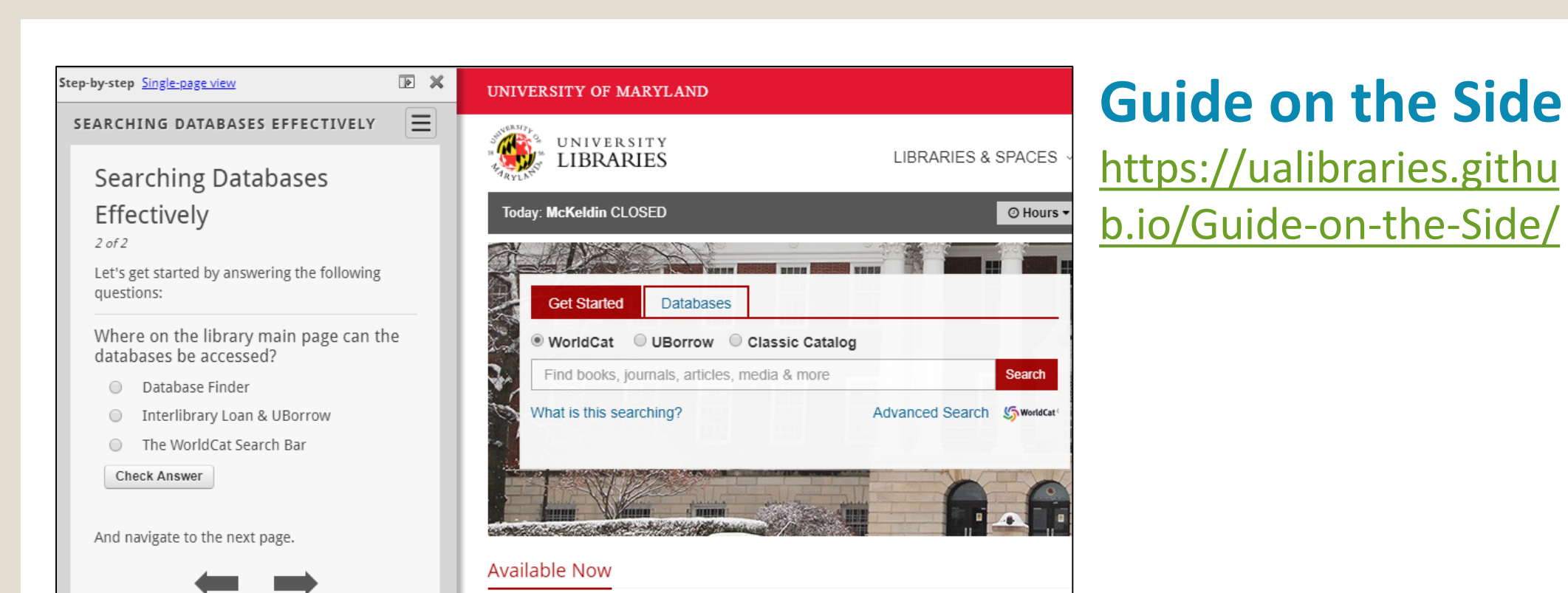


Figure 1. Students can practice searching the catalog

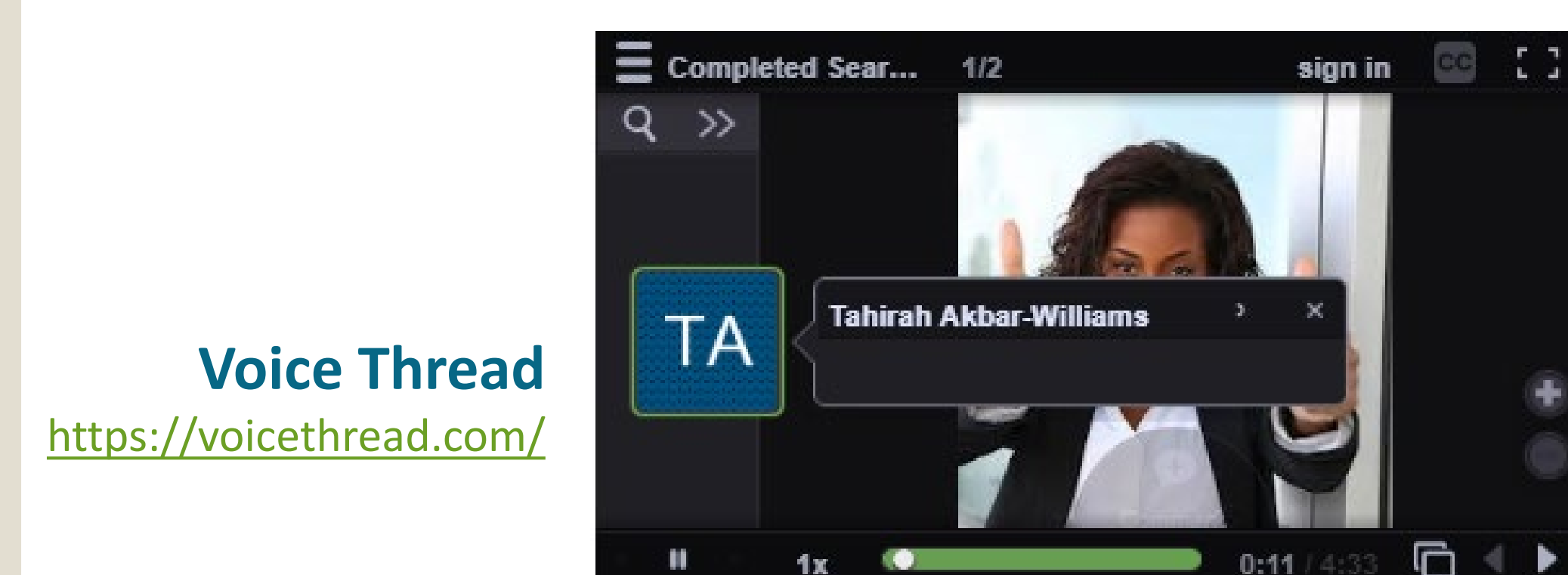


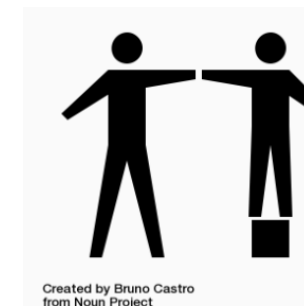
Figure 2. Students can ask questions using voice

UDL PRACTICES AT UMD LIBRARIES



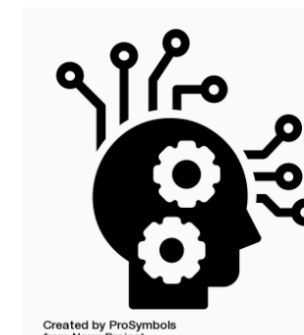
Engagement

1. **Providing an outline of our lectures** so students can take notes.
2. **Arranging students in circles** for group activities so they can see one another’s faces.
3. **Designing our online materials** to provide diverse students with the opportunity to engage in learning that is most meaningful and motivating to them (e.g. audio to support print text, graphics to illustrate complex information, etc.).
4. **Providing immediate assessment** and feedback (e.g. quizzes in online Canvas modules, Kahoot! surveys during in-class activities, after or during students’ presentations of selected material, etc.).
5. **Making ourselves available** to students in flexible formats (e.g. face-to-face, email, chat, WebEx, Skype, Google Hangouts, telephone).



Representation

1. **Aiming at delivering engaging lectures** using Kahoot!, clickers, laser pointers, in-class group activities.
2. **Sending presentations slides** and handouts to students in advance of the instruction session.
3. **Offering students to present section of the material** – use elements of the “flipped classroom” approach. We have used it in a PechaKucha format.
4. **Creating a glossary of terms** to explain library jargon.



Action & Expression

1. **Encouraging students to express knowledge** and skills in a variety of ways (e.g. online quizzes, assessment in paper format, oral presentations, in-class participation, group discussions, etc.).
2. **Providing students the opportunity to choose** which type of assignment they would like to complete (e.g. when teaching Zotero, some students are already familiar with it but are not familiar in searching a specific database and vice-versa. They have the option to either master the citation tool or increase their searching skills).
3. **Use of Kahoot! or clickers** will allow all students to participate without being centered out.

LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS

1. Get inspired by working with your **colleagues outside of your subject discipline.**
2. Ask for an expert advice from **instructional designers** (Fig. 3)
3. Follow **web accessibility guidelines** (Fig. 4)

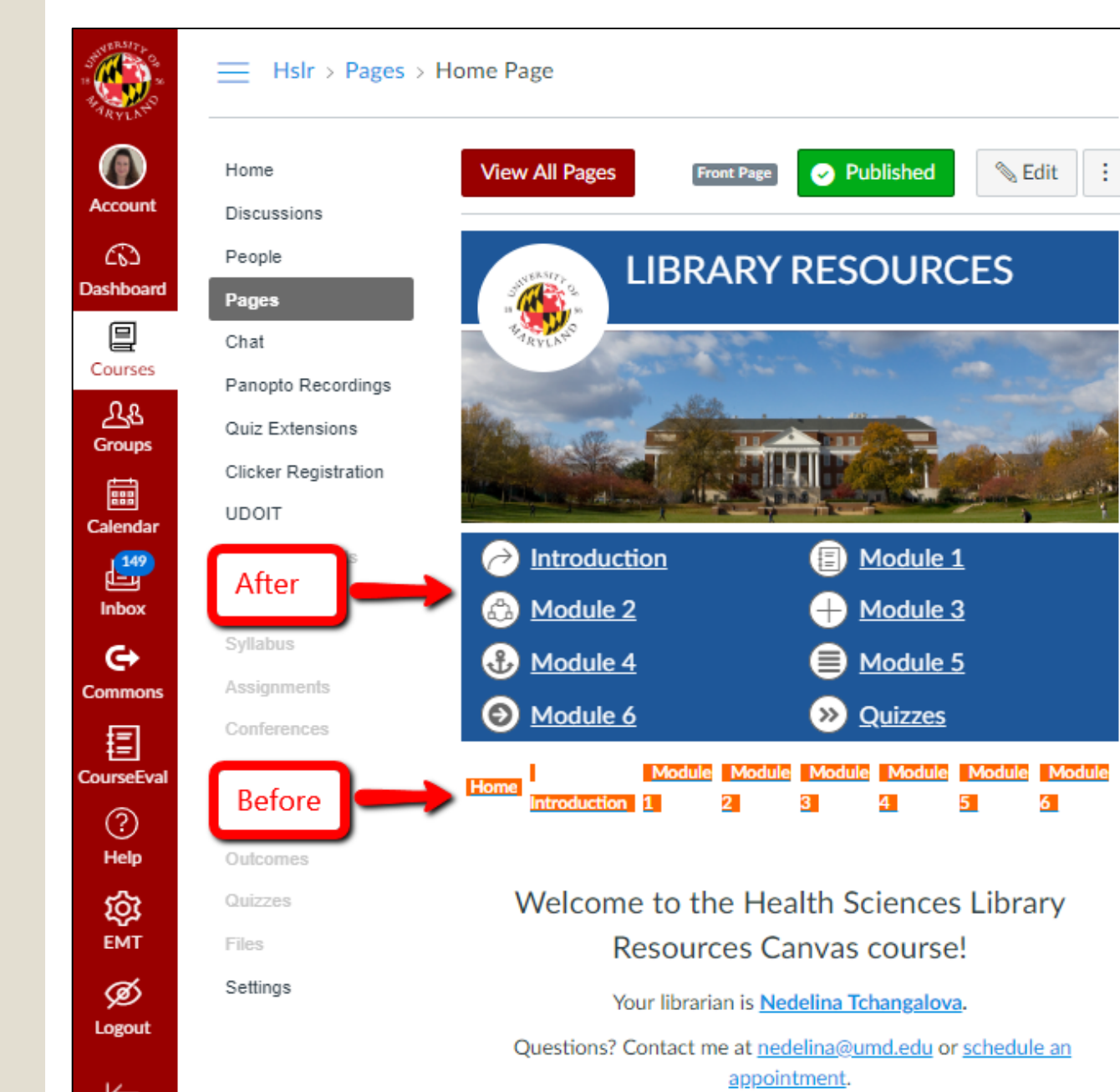


Figure 3. Instructional designers provide advice on areas in the course design for improvement.



Figure 4. Web accessibility experts provide resources for making your web content accessible

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the instructional designers at UMD College Park for providing advice and support in making our online course accessible to students with ALL abilities:

- **Susan B. Johnston**, Instructional Designer, Accessible Learning
- **Jun Yang**, Instructional Designer, Quality Assurance
- **Louisa Nkrumah**, Learning Experience Designer