Using VoiceThread - for Faculty

Should your students need additional support, please refer them to the "VoiceThread for Students" document.

Contents

What is VoiceThread?
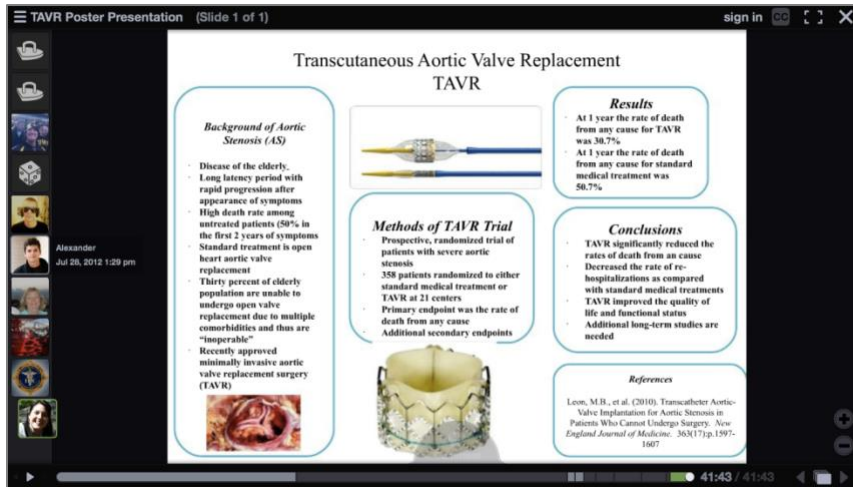
VoiceThread is a collaborative online tool that allows people to post media such as images, documents, and video and comment on them by webcam, microphone, telephone, text, and uploaded audio (MP3/WAV). This allows for a group discussion, analysis, or presentation around the shared media.

VoiceThread can be used to:

- Collaboratively produce group presentations

- Share videos, images, and documents and solicit feedback, questions, and/or analysis

- Gather perspectives on an idea or concept

- Build a sense of community and social presence in an online class

- Simulate cases, debates, and other situations

- Practice skills or work through a case

- Introduce class participants

In the example below, students presented a poster as if at a professional conference. The square icons to the left of the poster indicate classmate and instructor feedback and questions.

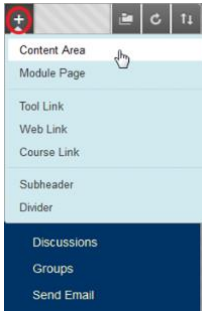Browse the VoiceThread Library to see example projects.

If you decide to use VoiceThread for a course activity or assignment, we suggest using it for a smaller ungraded activity earlier in the semester to help everyone become familiar with it. For example, before a class debate, you could use Voice Thread to provide lectures, or the class could use it to introduce themselves.

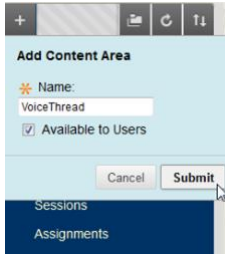## Link to VoiceThread in a Blackboard Course

VoiceThread (VT) is fully supported in Chrome and Firefox browsers. Keep your browsers up to date.

GW has a campus license to VoiceThread, allowing faculty and students to share VoiceThreads with a class without requiring a separate account. Following a link from Blackboard (Bb) will take you directly into VoiceThread. We suggest adding VoiceThread to your course as a main menu item so students can access the link from anywhere in the course.

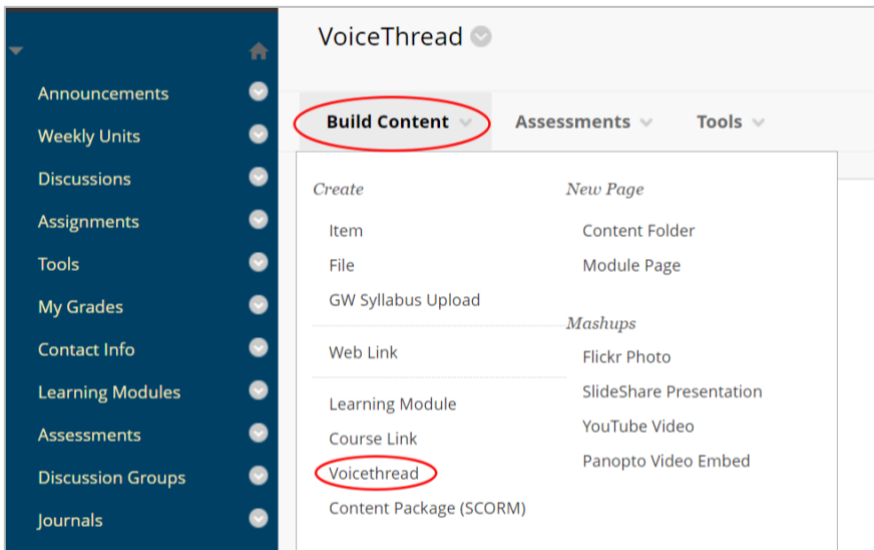- Go to the + sign to add a main menu item and select "Content Area" (see below).

- Name it "VoiceThread" and choose whether to make it available or unavailable to students. Click "Submit."

- Click on your new "VoiceThread" item in the main menu. The page will be blank.

Create a Link to VT – The "Course View"

- Click the "Build Content" tab
- Select "VoiceThread"

- Click the VT link that you just created, wait a few seconds for the tool to load.
- In the pop-up window that appears, choose Course View (see below). Every time you create a VT link, you will need to choose the view you would like students to see when they click on the VT link. For this main menu link, we recommend you choose Course View, which displays all the VT presentations shared with your course.

Once you click Course View, you will be asked to name the activity and this is the title that will show up for the item in Bb. You could call it something like "Course VoiceThreads" since that is what students will see when they click on this link. Then Click "Publish."

Instructions for Students
Refresh the course and add instructions for your students in the description of this item. Explain what VoiceThread is and how you will be using it in the course.

Below is some generic text that you are welcome to adapt:

What is VoiceThread?

VoiceThread (VT) is an online tool that allows us to converse using video, text, and/or voice in response to images, documents, and videos. This allows for a group discussion, analysis, or presentation around the shared media. For video tutorials and troubleshooting, visit the Voicethread How To website.
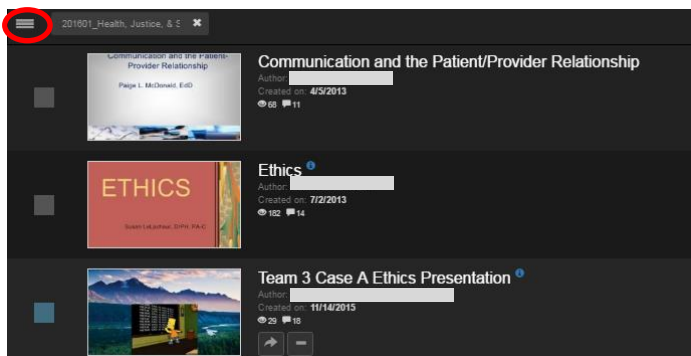
Using VoiceThread for Students:
https://smhs.gwu.edu/impact/sites/impact/files/VoiceThreadStudentGuide.pdf

Troubleshooting:
https://wp.voicethread.com/howto-category/troubleshooting/

Click on the item you just created and you will see the Course View. From the menu icon (three horizontal lines) in the upper left, you can sort existing presentations in different ways.
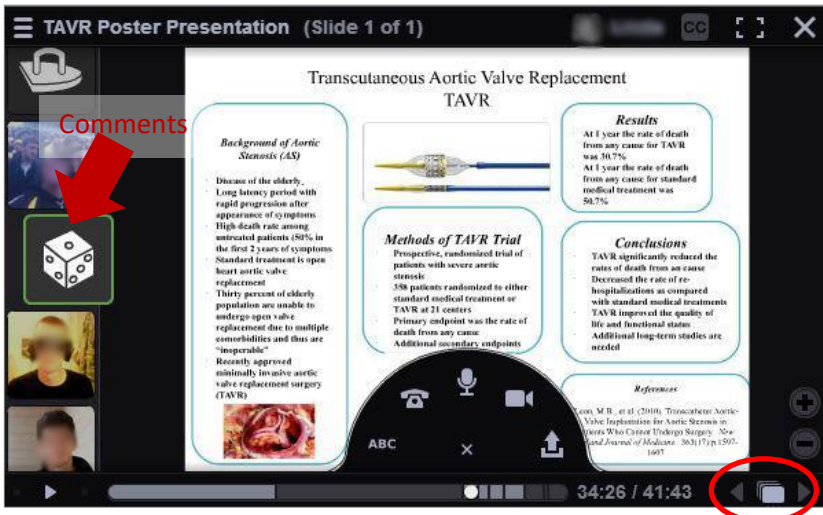

Add a Link to VT - Anywhere in your Course
● You can add a VT link anywhere, such as in your Weekly Sessions, under Assignments, etc.
● Use the same method as above, (click the "Build Content" tab, select "VoiceThread").
● Choose from the view types available: "Assignment Builder" is explained below, "Individual VoiceThread" will create a link that immediately opens one VT that already exists, "Course View" is explained above, and "VT Home Page" view is also explained below.
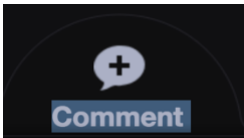
Listen to a VT Presentation
Click to open a presentation. The comments, represented by icons/avatars, play in the order in which they were created (see below). Click on an avatar to jump to that user's comment.

Use the arrows at the bottom right to navigate forward or back through the presentation.
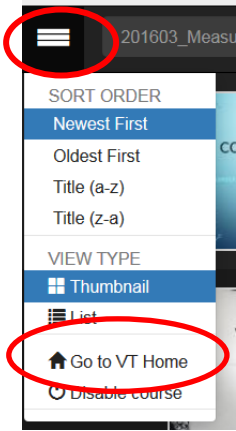
Comment on a VT

To make a comment, hover over the grey half circle at the bottom center of the presentation window and click on the + sign.
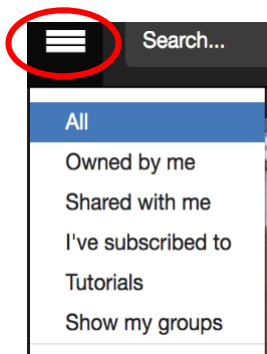

The commenting options will appear and allow you to comment: by text, telephone, microphone, webcam, or uploading a file (see larger figure above). If commenting by microphone or webcam, your browser may prompt you to grant VT permission to access your camera and/or microphone. VT is most effective and engaging when comments are made by webcam or microphone. We strongly suggest that you require students to comment by video or voice and model this by doing it yourself. To delete a comment, hover over it and click the trash button.

VT Home Page

The VT Home page is the main administrative view for your VT account. From there, you can navigate to all the VTs in all of your courses. It can be reached in Course View by clicking on the three-line Menu icon in the upper left corner and selecting "Go to VT Home."
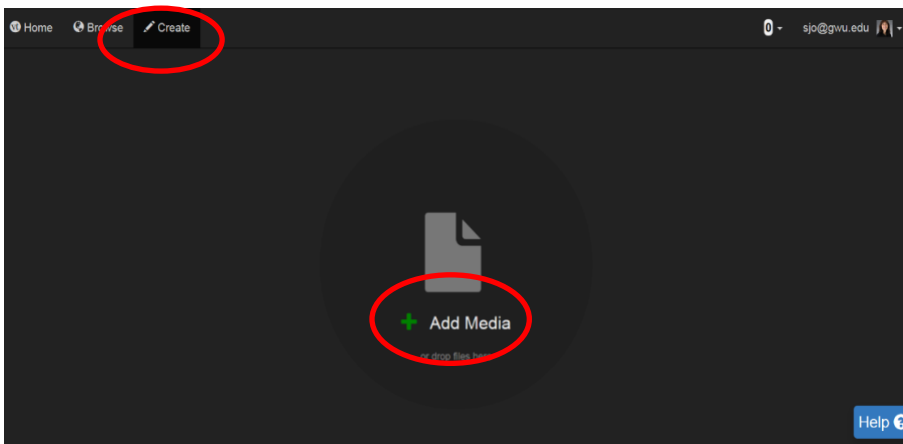
Then, use the Menu icon again and select "Owned by me" to see all of the VTs you have created.
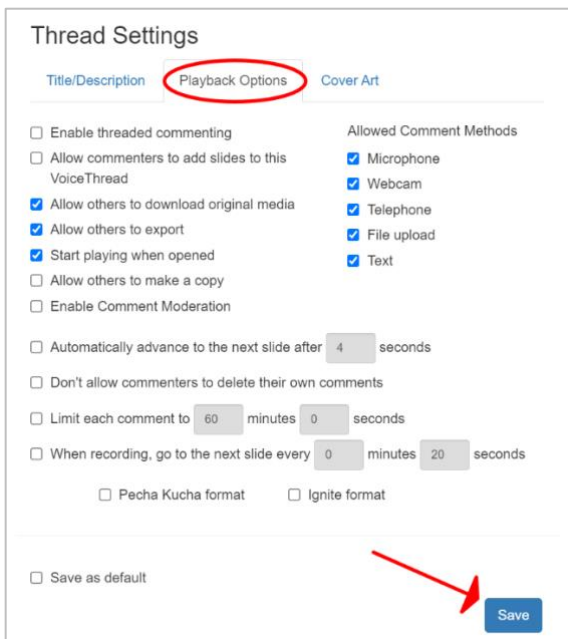

Creating and Sharing a New VoiceThread

At the top of the page when in VT Home, you will find the "Create" button (see below). (In the "Course View," this function is reached by clicking on "+ Add your own" in the upper right). Once you click on it, you will be asked from where you would like to add media. You can upload photos, graphics, non-narrated slides, pdfs, videos, and more.
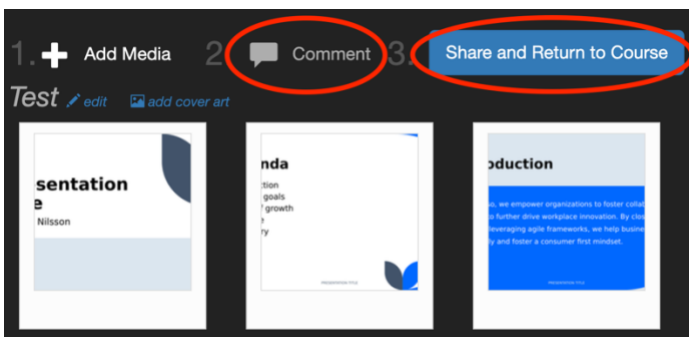
While your media is loading, VT will prompt you to add a title. The tab to the right of the Title/Description tab is Playback Options (see below). Listed are the default settings, which you may change. However, do not check "Enable Comment Moderation." Then click "Save."
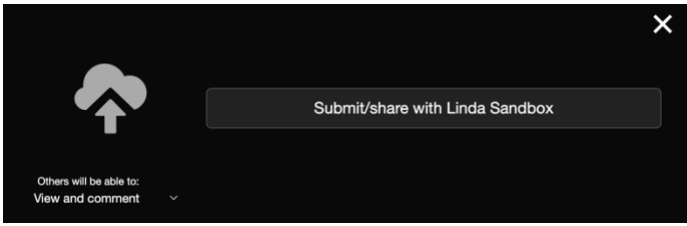

Now that you've created a VT, to add "comments" (or narration) to each slide, image, or other media, select the "#2 Comment" tab and add your comments (see below).

When you are done commenting, close the VT window by clicking on the X in the upper right corner. Then, click the "#3 Share and Return to Course" tab to share it with your class.
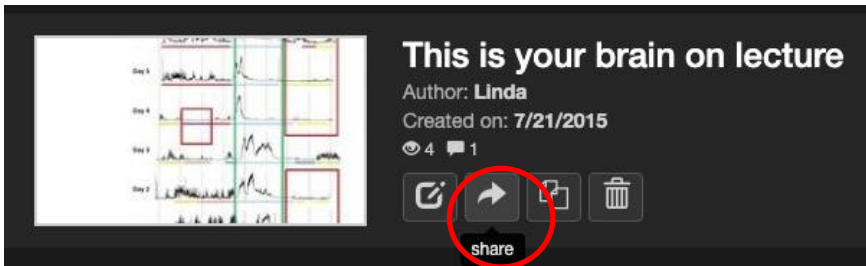

If you or your students create a VT from within the Course View, it will then automatically be shared with that course. Those with access to that course can view and comment.

You can always change the sharing settings of a VT from the "VT Home" page by hovering over your VT in the list and clicking the share button.
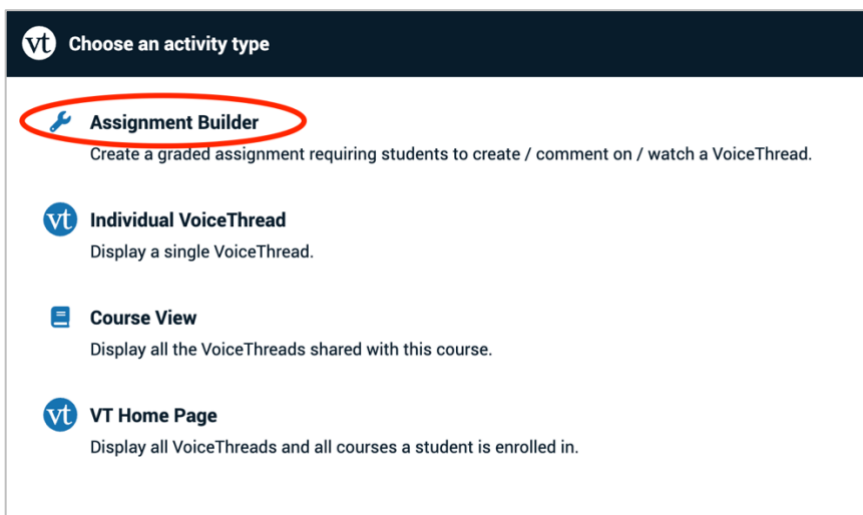

Please be aware that if re-using a VT for your course in a future semester, it must be explicitly shared with the course each semester. A link and instructions for VT will be copied with a course, but **VTs themselves must be re-shared each semester.**
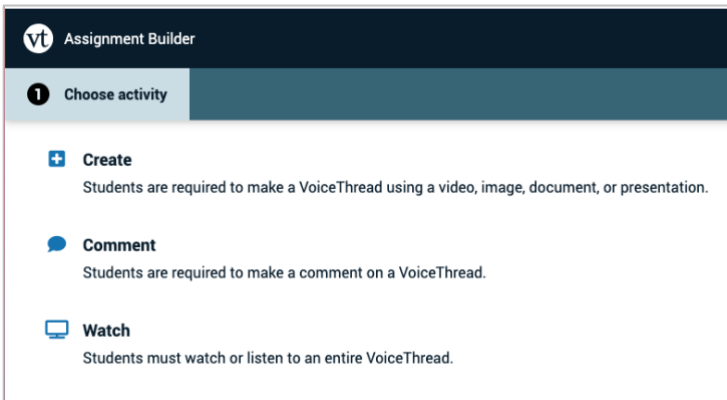
Assignment Builder

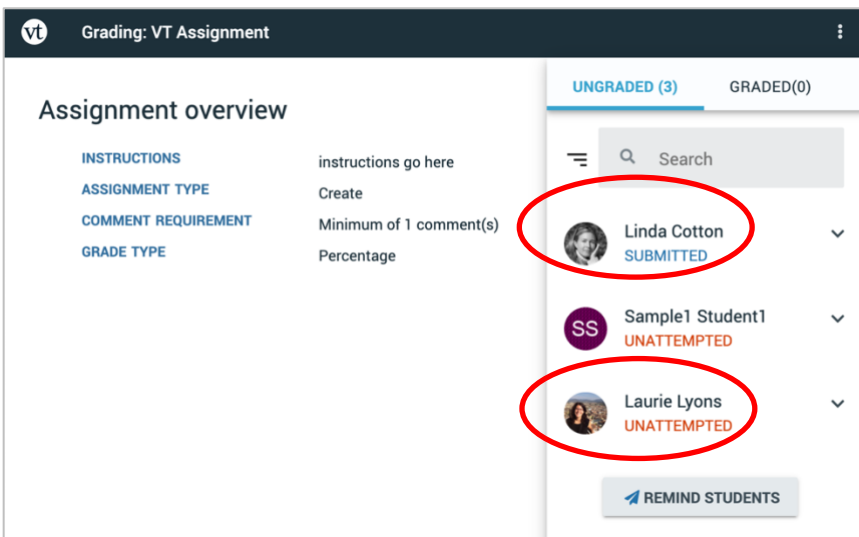VoiceThread assignments can facilitate grading, but they do have some limitations.

- Navigate to where you would like to place your assignment.
- Create a new link to VT under "Build Content."
- Choose Assignment Builder

Choose the type of assignment: Create, Comment or Watch. For the Comment assignment, you can either create a VT or select an existing VT, on which the students will comment.

To grade submitted VTs or comments, click on the assignment link and you will see a list of who has submitted and not submitted.

Limitations:

- Only the grade is recorded in Bb Grade Center, not the comments.

Accessibility

VoiceThread Universal is a version of VoiceThread that is made for screen readers. From the standard site:

- Go to your VT Home page.
- Click on your email address in the top-right corner of the page.
- Select "Display Preferences" from the menu.
- Under the Accessibility section, select "VoiceThread Universal" from the menu.

Online Help

- [How to instructions and videos](#)
- [General Troubleshooting](#)

Need more assistance?

Should your students need additional support, please refer them to the "VoiceThread for Students" document.

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