Making Your VoiceThread Accessible

VoiceThread provides a platform for you and your students to have asynchronous discussions using a combination of text, audio, and video. Students love the multiple means of expression that VoiceThread offers, and this is also an important component of Universal Design.

Whenever we use voice and video, we need to ensure accessibility for all of our students. Just as you already provide transcripts for audio and accurate captions for videos, you will find that you can provide these same features in VoiceThread as well.

Accessibility Guidelines for Using VoiceThread

- **Central media** (the text, image, or video on your VoiceThread "slide") is considered instructional material and must be accessible. Once captioning is in place, it can be copied along with the VoiceThread for use in future semesters.

- **Instructor comments** introducing central media or providing instructions must be accessible. As with central media, captions remain with the VoiceThread when it is copied for use in a new course. If your central media contains an image, use a comment to describe the image for the visually impaired.

- **Instructor replies** to student comments are considered one-time use and do not require captioning or transcripts unless a student in the course requires accommodation.

- **VoiceThread Universal** is a text-only version of VoiceThread that can be used with screen readers. It will read all text and all captioned audio/video in a VoiceThread. If a student in your course has a DSS-verified visual or hearing impairment, please complete the VoiceThread Universal Support form so that we can schedule a VoiceThread Universal orientation for you and your student. We will also arrange for 24-hour captioning of audio and video student comments so that your student has timely access to the full VoiceThread conversation.

Captioning Process for VoiceThread

Accessible Audio

You have two options to provide a text version of audio comments:

- Option 1: Underneath the audio comment, provide a text comment to serve as a transcript. You may want to create a VoiceThread identity for this purpose so that students see it is a text version of the comment rather than a new one. You are welcome to download and use the icon on this page!

- Option 2: Request captioning of your audio comment using the same process as for video (see next section).

Accessible Video

Southwestern College's captioning service is integrated into our VoiceThread site license, so requesting captions is easy! Follow these two steps:

1. Request captioning with the SWC VoiceThread Setup Request form in our VoiceThread Resource Site or by contacting DSPS directly. Just like other captioning requests, you will provide semester, course, and section number. Estimate the total minutes you will need captioned for all of this course's VoiceThreads this semester, and you can caption all semester long without any extra paperwork!

2. When you are notified that your request has been approved, you can start ordering captioning from within your VoiceThreads (see next section for details).

How to Order Captioning in VoiceThread

Captioning Central Media

1. Select the CC icon in the top right corner and choose "Add captions."

2. In the resulting dialog box, select the green play icon next to "Automatic Sync via Southwestern," and then select "OK."
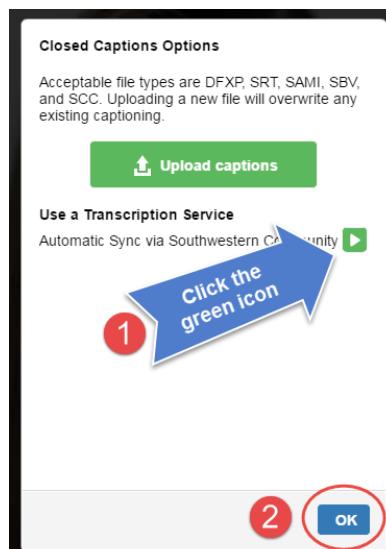
A request for captioning will now be sent to AST. As soon as captions are completed, they will be added into your VoiceThread and you will receive an emailed notification. Magic!

3. To view captions, select the CC icon and choose "On." Now play the comment.
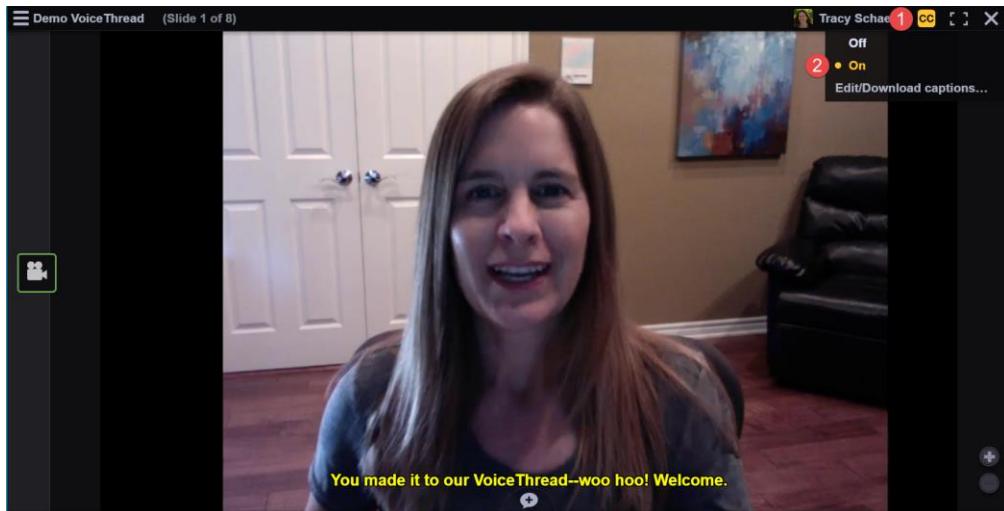
Captioning Comments

Your introductory remarks for a slide are considered instructional material and must be captioned. Replies to students during a discussion are considered one-time use and do not need captions unless a student in the course requires captioning.

As a best practice in Universal Design, varying your comment formats (text, audio, video) during a discussion is recommended. Here are the steps to caption comments:

1. Play your comment and select the CC icon.
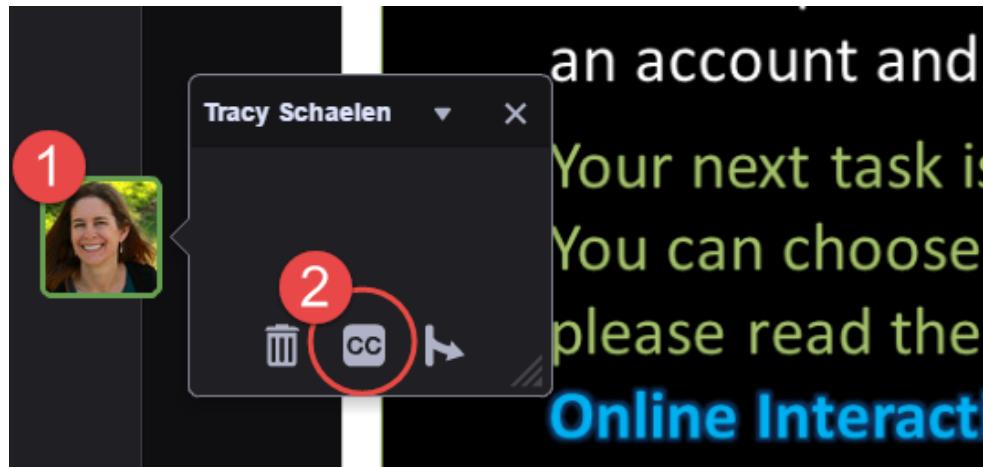
2. In the resulting dialog box, select the green play icon next to "Automatic Sync via Southwestern," and then select "OK."
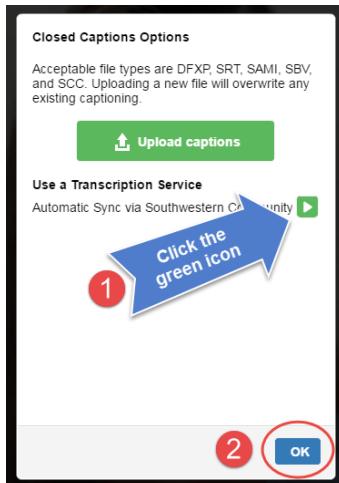
A request for captioning will now be sent to AST. As soon as captions are completed, they will be added into your VoiceThread and you will receive an emailed notification.

3. To view the captions, first make sure that caption display for this VoiceThread is "on."
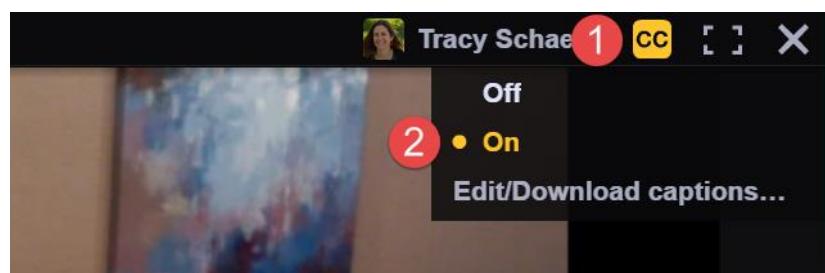
Play the comment, and captions will display.
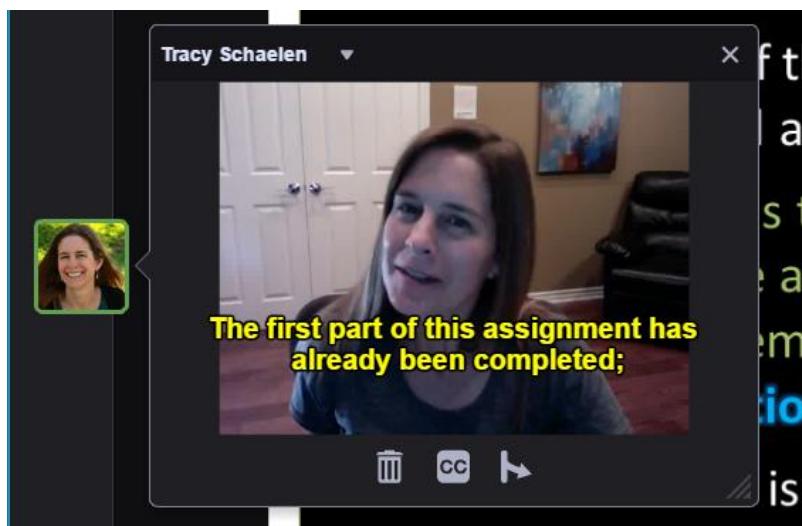
Happy VoiceThreading, SWC!