What is VoiceThread?
VT is an interactive multimedia, slide show tool which allows users to hold conversations based on images, documents, or videos. VT is accessible and cost effective and applicable for any subject matter and/or grade level. VT can be used in any learning environment from group projects to individual projects. VT allows students to participate and collaborate in many ways at their own pace. VT creators can send, share, and publish their slide shows.

How much does VoiceThread cost?
Registration for VT is free for single users with up to 50 slides. For single teachers per school, the cost is $15/month or $79/year for 51 users with up to 500 slides. School license prices varies starting at $450 for 350 users. District/State license must contact customer service for quote.
*Fees automatically renew

What are the benefits of VoiceThread?
1. Passive learners become active learners
2. Designed to promote collaboration development of knowledge and opinion by giving opportunities to express their voice
3. Makes learning meaningful & fun
4. Simple and easy

What are some sample strategies for implementation?
1. Book Report
2. Assessment tool
3. Peer, Parent, Teacher Feedback
4. Free Writing
5. Storytelling

Teaching Tips Advice from Brad Wilson
1. Start Smart—1st VT should be easy & quick
2. Participate– Browse VT library for topics for students to critique
3. Set the Tone—Show students of good & bad VT
4. Allow Exploration—Show students how to search for VT related o a topic
5. Show Me, Don’t Tell Me—Demonstrate how to create a slideshow before having students log in
6. Practice Commenting—Guide students o how to respond on VT
7. Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail—Use a story board template or script
8. Students as Teachers—Keep your sanity by allowing students that understand VT to help other students

Additional Resources:
• VoiceThread—www.voicethread.com
• VT How to Tutorial—http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BULuq4LS10w
• TechieTeacher’s VT in the Classroom Page.- http://www.pageflakes.com/techieteacher/20554289
• Great EFL/ESL resource at http://eflclassroom.ning.com/wpage/voicethread
• After-School VoiceThread Workshop by Kevin Jarrett - http://voicethread-workshop.wikispaces.com/
• Digital Storytelling Resources (with good section on VoiceThread) by Jason Ohler & Kristin Hokanson - http://theconnectedclassroom.wikispaces.com/Digital_Storytelling
• Using VoiceThread to create your own online portfolio - Michele Martin - http://michelemartin.typepad.com/thebambooprojectblog/2008/02/using-voicethre.html

Created by Latonia Evans 2014
Creating a VoiceThread project:

Click on create

You have to start by uploading images/videos, there are quite a few ways you can upload images

- My Computer
  - Make sure you have images that are saved as image files, not on a word document
  - Find where your images are located
  - Select your images and hit enter
  - Upload as many images that you have saved that you want to use
  - They will appear in the order you upload, you can click and drag into any order you wish
- URL
  - Copy the url (web address) of the picture you would like to use
  - Paste it into the space provided, if you get a green check mark it means it worked, if you do not, troubleshoot why the url is not working
- Media Sources
  - There are few different media sources you can upload from, check back to see if new sources are added, follow the directions to upload from each site
- Webcam
  - If you have a webcam enabled on the computer you are using you can snap a shot from the webcam. You usually have to click allow

Once an image/video is upload you can:

- Add a title and link, Delete it, Rotate it
- Click on the image and it will appear on the left hand side of the page, this is where you can make your edits

Making comments/recording your voice:

- Click on the image that you want to record on. Make sure you have some type of microphone (either on your computer, or plugged in)
- Click on comment
- If you don’t have a picture uploaded as your character picture in VoiceThread it will ask you to upload on or you can do it later
- Click on where it says comment. Then click on record
- Begin talking and press stop when done
- Click on save or cancel

While you are recording your voice, you can also be drawing on the picture and recording the drawing

- Choose a color then begin drawing on the picture
- Click on the next arrow or back arrow to comment on other images within your project

Going back in and editing your VoiceThread

- After logging in click on myvoice, your projects should be listed in there
- Click on the icon that looks like a gear and select edit
VoiceThread Tips for Teachers

There is no doubt that VoiceThread has the potential to be one of the most motivating tools that you use to facilitate instruction in your classroom this year. Middle grades students are intrinsically drawn to conversations with peers, so structuring opportunities for collaborative dialogue around classroom content is a logical decision!

**To make your VoiceThread experiences the most meaningful, consider:**

**Allowing students to draft comments in groups of 2 or 3:** After you introduce new VoiceThread presentations, it is always helpful to give students time to work in small groups to brainstorm and draft initial comments together. This ensures that the first comments added to your thread will be well thought out and aligned with the directions you’ve given for the assignment. What’s more, this ensures that all students will have a comment in a presentation to follow, increasing their interest!

**Joining in the conversation:** In the early stages of your work with VoiceThread, it is important to join in the conversations with your students! By doing so, you’ll be able to model the kinds of comments that are productive and valuable. Be sure to use proper grammar and spelling—and to elaborate on your thinking. Also, be sure to find ways to respond to other students and to ask lots of questions.

Those are the skills that make for high quality VoiceThread presentations—but they won’t come naturally to most middle schoolers. Seeing examples from you will help students to learn more about quality additions to digital conversations.

**Highlighting comments in class:** After starting a VoiceThread presentation, it is important to revisit the conversation occasionally in class in order to keep the project in the forefront of your students’ minds. Browsing and selecting “Spotlight Comments” a few times a week will provide students with examples of high quality work to model their own posts after.

Be sure to spotlight different kinds of comments to your students—especially those where students are reading and responding to one another. Middle graders can often be egocentric—which translates into VoiceThread presentations where everyone is talking but nobody is listening or responding! By “Spotlighting” students that are interacting with one another, you’ll begin to see more cross-conversations in your digital presentations.

Also, be sure to spotlight comments that don’t add to conversations—while this obviously has to be done gently so as not to hurt the feelings of your students, it is important for classes to begin to recognize that “throw-away” comments are not valued in digital conversations.
**Background Knowledge:** Genes contain hereditary information which is passed from parent to offspring. Offspring receive the same amount of hereditary information from each parent. Personality is shaped both by inherited traits and from your environment. Learned behaviors are not controlled or inherited through hereditary information.

**Directions:** As you listen to the teacher read the story, list the unique characteristics mentioned about the little boy in the appropriate column below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inherited Traits</th>
<th>Acquired Traits/Learned Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion Questions:**
Which trait was the most frequent?
Which trait was the least frequent?
Were there any traits that occurred equally in the classroom population? If so, which ones?
What are 3 other traits that you could compare that we have not discussed?

**Standards:**
7-2.7 Distinguish between inherited traits and those acquired from environmental factors.
**ELA.RL.6.10** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

**Objective:** Students will examine the difference between inherited traits and learned behaviors.
SCIENCE ACTIVITY 2  
A Personal Survey of Inherited Human Traits (cont.)

How Unique Are You?

Complete this survey by putting a check in either the "yes" or "no" column for each trait. Then compare your traits to the group's traits by putting the number of people with that trait also in the "yes" or "no" boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAIT</th>
<th>Dominant Allele</th>
<th>Recessive Allele</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Are you male?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Are you right-handed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Do you have mid-digital hair on your knuckles?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Do you have detached ear lobes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Do you have naturally curly hair?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Do you have a widow's peak?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Do you have freckles?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Do you have dimples?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Do you have a cleft chin?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Can you roll your tongue?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Do you have allergies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Is your index finger (pointer) shorter than your ring finger?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Do you have a straight thumb (not a hitch-hiker’s thumb)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) When you clasp your hands, do you cross your left thumb over your right?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) Can you see the colors red &amp; green?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) Are you intelligent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) Do you have dyed hair?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) Do you have pierced ears?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s Special About Us?

Use the following script and another group’s survey of inherited traits to create your group’s version of What’s Special About Me, Mama? This information will be recorded using VoiceThread.

Other Group’s Name ____________________________________________
Your Group’s Name ____________________________________________

Script

What’s special about us, ______________________ (Insert your group’s name here)? So many things, ______________________ (Insert other group’s name here). Like what, ______________________ (Insert your group’s name here)? Like your ______________________ (Insert a special trait here), ______________________ (Insert other group’s name here) because ______________________

________________________ (Insert rationale for why this trait is special).

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________________________ (Insert rationale for why this trait is special).
Reflecting on a Thread

Using the questions below as a guide, reflect on the comments made by your classmates in our current Voicethread conversation.

Highlight a comment from our Voicethread conversation that closely matches your own thinking. Why does this comment resonate with—or make sense to—you?

Highlight a comment from our Voicethread conversation that challenged your thinking in a good way and/or made you rethink one of your original ideas. What about the new comment was challenging? What are you going to do now that your original belief was challenged? Will you change your mind? Do more researching/thinking/talking with others?

Highlight a comment from our Voicethread conversation that you respectfully disagree with. If you were to engage in a conversation with the commenter, what evidence/argument would you use to persuade them to change their point of view?

Highlight the strand of conversation from our Voicethread conversation that was the most interesting or motivating to you. Which ideas would you like to have more time to talk about? Why? What new topics does this conversation make you want to study next?

Created by Bill Ferriter, wferriter@hotmail.com, http://teacherleaders.typepad.com/the_tempered_radical
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>You're getting there</th>
<th>Rock Solid</th>
<th>Reading Rockstar</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Comments seem to be completely out of place—unconnected to the selection. Little evidence suggests that the student has thought deeply before commenting. Feedback provided in comment doesn’t offer productive guid-</td>
<td>While comments demonstrate some obvious connection to the student and/or the selection, they demonstrate simple thinking. Reader is not convinced that the student has thought deeply about the selection before commenting. The comments added share infor-</td>
<td>All comments are clearly connected to the student and/or the selection. Comments provide evidence that the student has considered the selection AND the other comments added to the conversation carefully before com-</td>
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Tips for Commenting on VoiceThread

To be an active VoiceThreader, start by carefully working your way through a presentation. While viewing pictures and listening to the comments that have been added by other users, you should:

1. **Gather Facts**: Jot down things that are interesting and new to you.
2. **Make Connections**: Relate and compare things you are viewing and hearing to things that you already know.
3. **Ask Questions**: What about the comments and presentation is confusing to you? What don’t you understand? How will you find the answer? Remember that there will ALWAYS be questions in an active thinker’s mind!
4. **Give Opinions**: Make judgments about what you are viewing and hearing. Do you agree? Do you disagree? Like? Dislike? Do you support or oppose anything that you have heard or seen? Why?

Use the following sentence starters to shape your thoughts and comments while viewing or participating in VoiceThread presentations. Comments based on these kinds of statements make VoiceThreads interactive and engaging.

- This reminds me of...
- This is similar to...
- I wonder...
- I realized...
- I noticed...
- You can relate this to...
- I’d like to know...
- I’m surprised that...
- If I were __________, I would ________________
- If __________ then ___________
- Although it seems...
- I’m not sure that...

While commenting, try to respond directly to other viewers. Begin by quoting some part of the comment that you are responding to help other listeners know what it is that has caught your attention. Then, explain your own thinking in a few short sentences. Elaboration is important when you’re trying to make a point. Finally, finish your comment with a question that other listeners can reply to. Questions help to keep digital conversations going!

When responding to another viewer, don’t be afraid to disagree with something that they have said. Challenging the thinking of another viewer will help them to reconsider their own thinking—and will force you to be able to explain yours! Just be sure to disagree agreeably—impolite people are rarely influential.

If your thinking gets challenged by another viewer in a VoiceThread, don’t be offended. Listen to your peers, consider their positions and decide whether or not you agree with them. You might discover that they’ve got good ideas you hadn’t thought about. Either way, be sure to respond—let your challengers know how their ideas have influenced you.
Ideas for Using VoiceThread in Various Contents

- **Math**
  - Problem Solving
  - Using images to describe concepts (fractions, shapes); Steps in a process (long division); Student math casts; Describe alternative ways to solve problems

- **Science**
  - Science Fair Project
  - Lab instructions; Cause/effect; Compare/contrast (habitats); Document experiments; What if?; Mystery element; Share models (solar system); Brainstorm; Summarize

- **Language Arts**
  - Genres
  - Publish writing, illustrate stories; Predict what will happen next; Group story telling; Book talks; Poetry anthologies/analysis; Choose your own adventure; Make your own ending; Report on an event; Compare/contrast (past and present); Interviews

- **Art & Music**
  - Compare/contrast composers; King Tut Field Trip; Math—Triangle Scavenger Hunt; Portfolios; Critiquing student work; Playing and commenting on different styles of music; Learn about and identify sounds from different instruments

- **Health**
  - Amazing Athletic People Experiment
  - Keep track of your progress; Journal; Research and discuss health issues; Compare/contrast meal plans; Summarize; Compare/contrast

- **Social Studies**
  - Middle School conversation around the genocide in Darfur; Letters from Internment Camps (Grade 4); Debates; Controversial issues; Historical timelines; React to historical photos; Discuss cause and effect; Interviews; Steps in processes (bill to law); Time capsule; "Pen pals"; Brainstorm; Summarize; Cultural Exchanges

- **ELL & World Languages**
  - Alternative assessments; Storytelling; Cards; Pronunciation practice (quote of the week); Non-threatening participation; Tours; Cultural Exchanges