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### Education Changes Everything

A Few Quick Tips for Using the Virtual Classroom

When you first get onto the class site, this is the screen you will see. You will click on the tabs on the left side of the screen to access the different areas of the classroom.

The tabs are: Welcome, Announcements*, Discussions*, Calendar, Meetings/Live Chats*, Resource Center*, Links, Directory, Messages*, Preferences, Help Desk, Web Tools and Web Forms. (* indicates the tabs you will utilize most often)
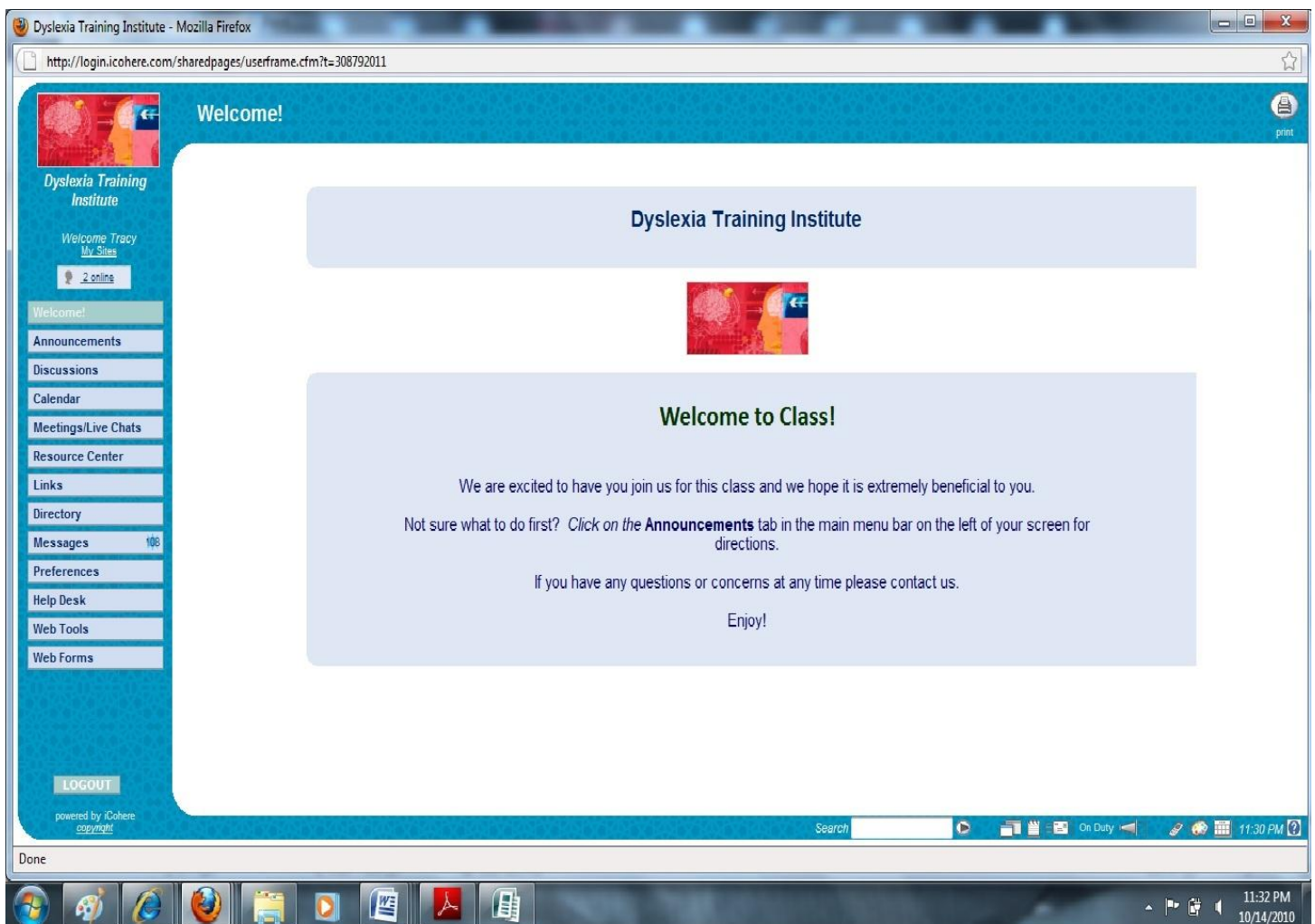
Discussion Boards - To access the discussion boards you click on the Discussions tab on the left (green arrow). Below is a sample of discussion threads from one of our courses. The discussion threads will differ from course to course. You click on any of the discussion titles (blue arrow) and you will access the topics for that discussion thread.

Any discussion threads that you no longer need access to can be hidden from view by clicking the box on the far right of that discussion thread (red arrow), then click the *apply* button on the top right of your screen (yellow arrow). This will hide the discussion thread, but not delete it. You can see any hidden treads by clicking on the picture of the box (purple arrow) in the middle of the top of your screen (next to the box tells you how many discussion threads you have hidden). You can move them from the hidden area back to your view area anytime. Simply click on the box to the far right of the discussion thread and click the *apply* button at the top of your screen.

Discussion Topics in a Discussion Thread - This screen shows a sample list of discussion topics that are listed in a discussion thread. You would click on a discussion topic to access the discussion board for that topic.

On the following page you will see two examples of discussion boards. The top one is text postings between class participants and the instructor. The bottom one is a posting by an instructor, including a video clip that you would simply click on to watch. On all discussion threads, you can contribute to the discussion by clicking on the contribute button that appears at the bottom of the screen (yellow arrow). Or, to respond to a specific individuals posting you can click on the contribute button in the lower right corner of their post (red arrow).

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Discussion posts may "hide" (go out of view) after you have read the discussion posts for that topic and left it. When you go back into a discussion topic you may only see new posting by participants; old posts may be hidden from view. If you would like to view the "hidden" posts, simply click on the *click here* (yellow arrow) next to the words, "To view all previous posts," and you will be able to view all previous posts.
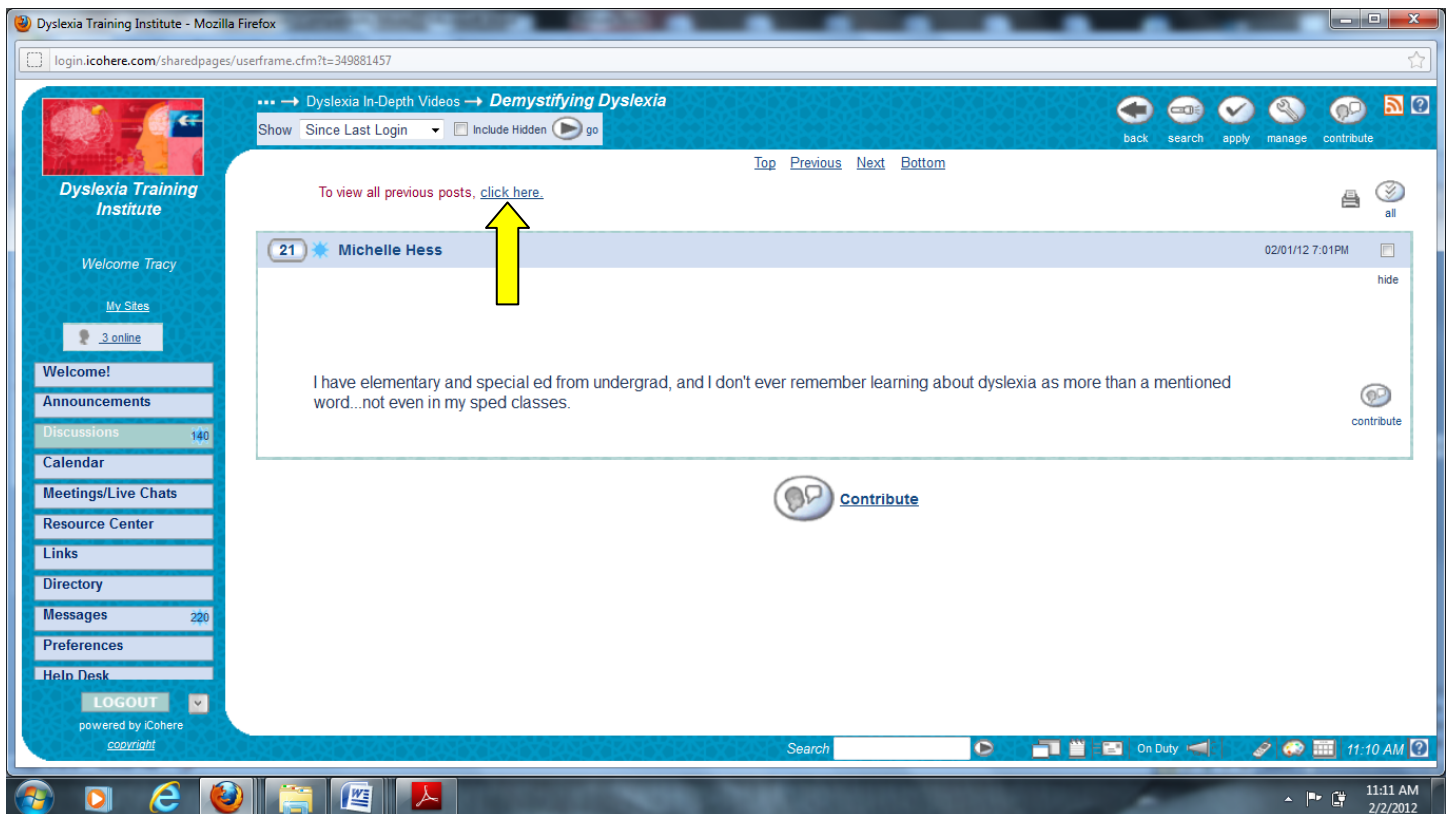
Live Chat or Quick Meeting - Below is a picture of what will appear on your screen during a Live Chat or Quick Meeting. You can enlarge the text chat box so it fills your screen. Live Chats are scheduled by instructors. QuickMeetings can happen anytime you are on the site and want to live text chat with another class participant who is also online at that time.

Live Chats are accessed through the Meetings/Live Chats tab on the left of your screen (red arrow). You can start a QuickMeeting by clicking on the small box above with the outline of a head and number of people online (yellow arrow), and then invite participants you would like to live chat with by selecting their name from the pop-up box.
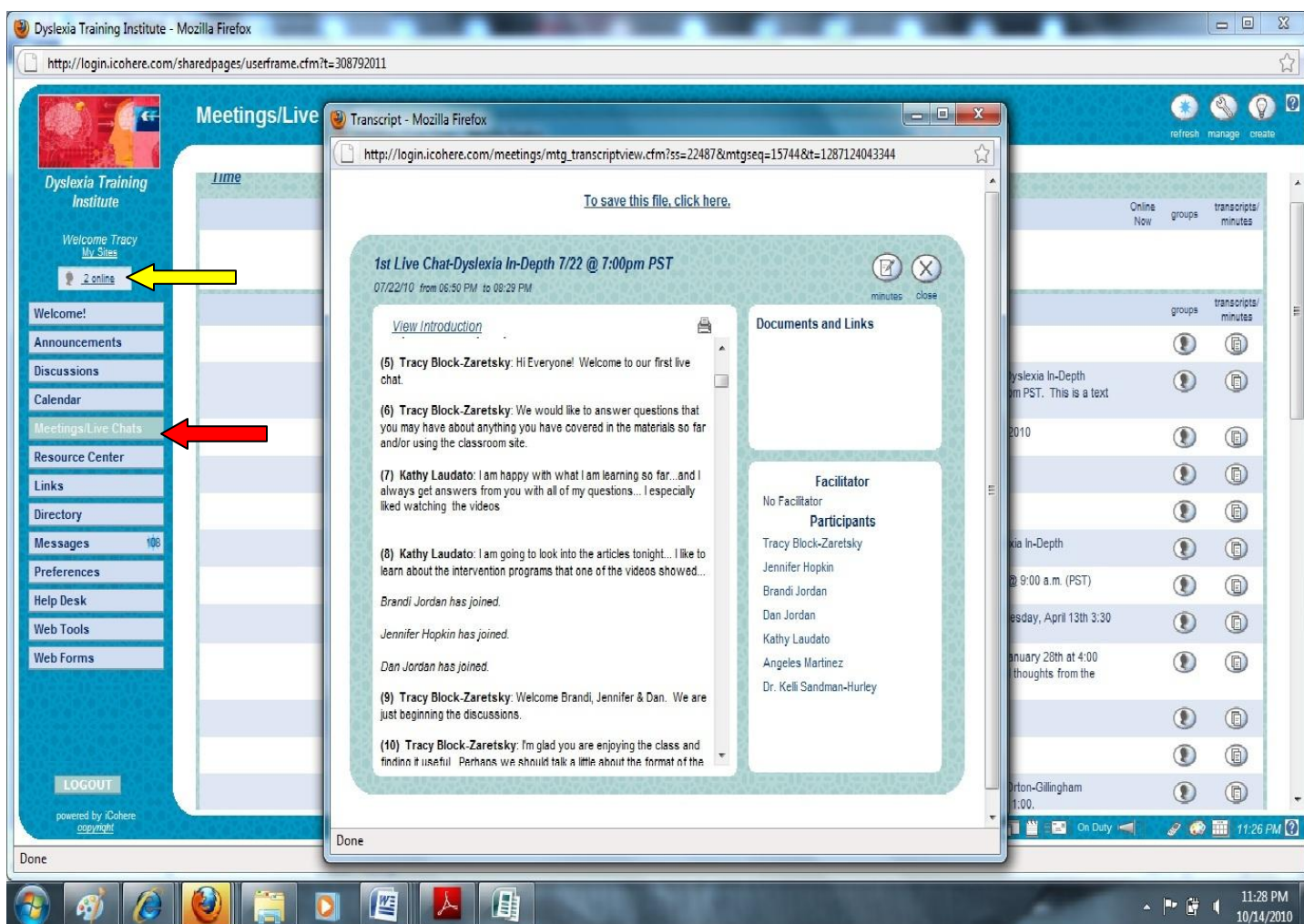
Webinars are accessed through the Meetings/Live Chats tab on the left of your screen. Below is a picture of what the webinar may look like. Not all webinars will have video feed, so you may not see the instructors during the webinar. All live webinars offer you the opportunity to ask or post your questions. Archived webinars can be viewed anytime. We suggest you make note of your questions if you are watching an archived webinar so you can post your questions on the discussion boards or email them to the instructors.
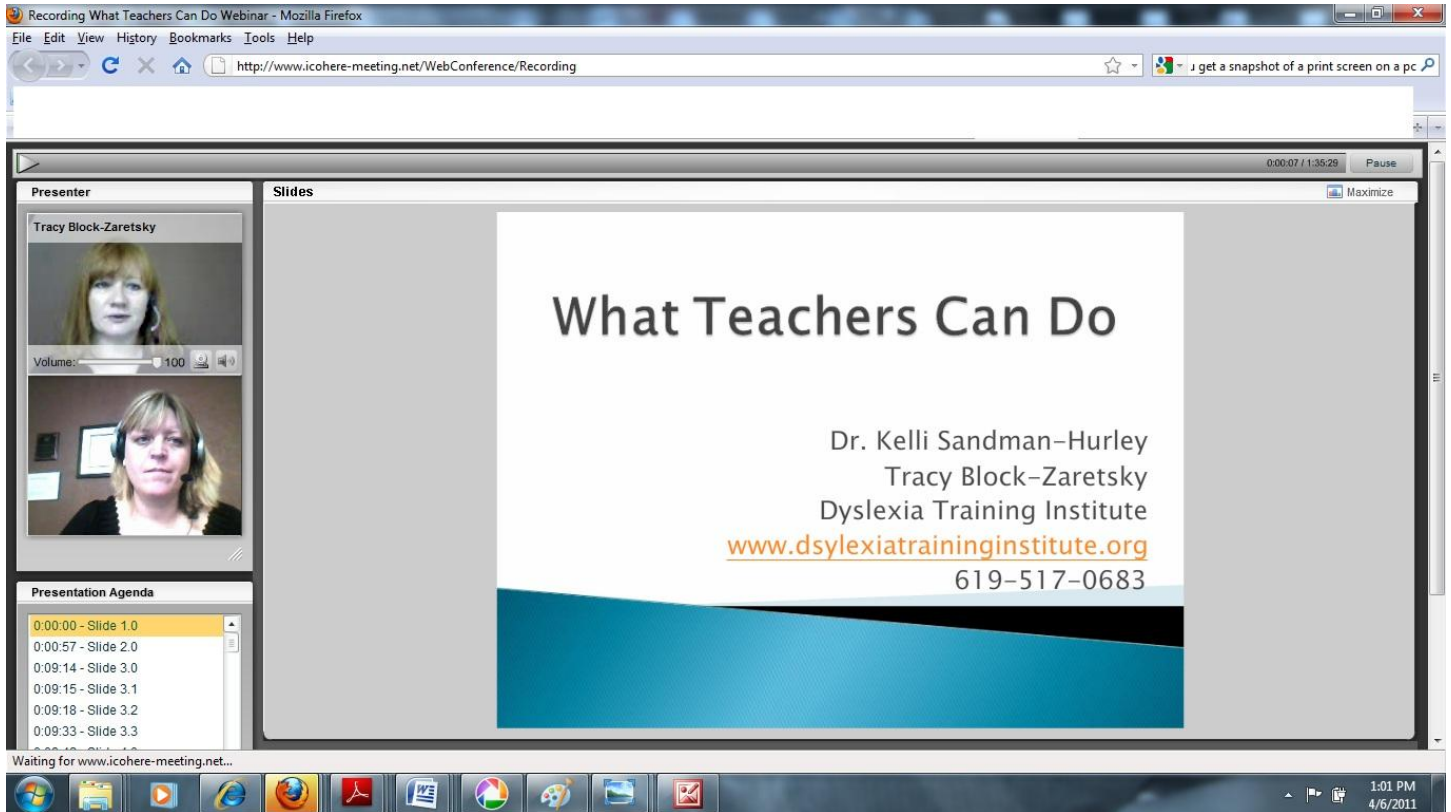
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Email/Messages – You can email the instructors or class participants using the Messages tab on the left of your screen. Once in the Messages screen you can click on any email to read an email sent to you. To create an email click on the *create* button (yellow arrow) in the top right of your screen. A new message screen will appear (see below). In the *Nickname* box type the first name of the person you want to email, then click the + button (green arrow) next to the box. Their name will appear in the *To* or *CC* or *BCC* box. To include additional people, follow the same steps. Fill in the *Subject* box, then the content of your email in the *Text* box. You can add attachments by clicking on the *attach* button (orange arrow) in the *Links and Attachment* section under the *Text* box (you will have to scroll down to see this portion of the *Messages* screen). To send your email/message, click the *send* button (red arrow) on the top right of the *Messages* screen.