The Center for Teaching, Learning, & Technology

Instructional Technology Workshops

Elluminate Plan!

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Faculty and Staff Development Programs

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Elluminate *Plan!*

Elluminate *Plan!* is a desktop application that enables you to prepare the content of a Blackboard Collaborate session ahead of time and then automate the actions within a session. During the session, the selection of a session plan item will trigger an action in Blackboard Collaborate (e.g., start recording, move to the next screen, create breakout rooms, load and present a quiz, play a multimedia file, etc.).

Launching Elluminate *Plan!*

To launch Elluminate *Plan!*, do one of the following:
- Click or double-click on the Elluminate *Plan!* application icon

<div align="center">OR</div>

- Select Start > Programs (or All Programs) > Elluminate > Elluminate Plan! > Elluminate Plan!

A new, empty plan will open automatically, ready for you to edit.

The *Plan!* User Interface

The Elluminate *Plan!* interface consists of the Plan editor, the Quiz editor and the Whiteboard editor. Normally, you will see the Plan editor only; however, you can make the Quiz and Whiteboard editors visible using the optional Tab bar (which, by default, is hidden). The interface also includes the standard Title and Menu bars.
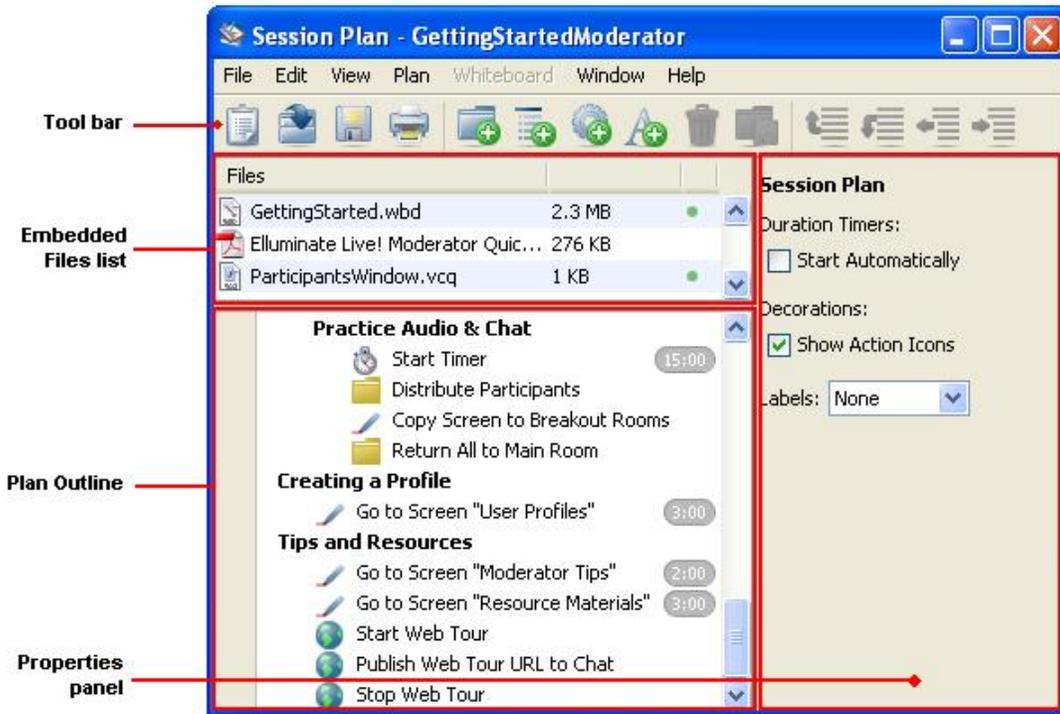

Moving Between Editors

The Plan editor is displayed when you open Elluminate *Plan!* To switch to the Quiz or Whiteboard editor, select it from the View menu. The View menu also gives you the option to show the Tab bar which lets you quickly move between editors.
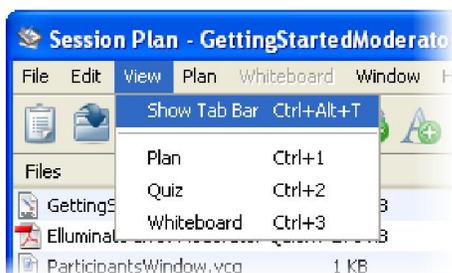
The Plan Editor

The Plan editor consists of four elements:

1. The Tool bar contains buttons to perform common operations.
2. The Embedded Files list contains the embedded content of the session plan.
3. The Plan Outline contains the individual items that constitute the session plan.
4. The Properties panel contains session plan, file or item options, depending on which is currently selected.

When you run the session plan in Blackboard Collaborate, of the above elements, only the Plan Outline and Embedded Files list will be displayed. By default, the Embedded Files list is collapsed (hidden) so you will have to pull down the divider to display the list.
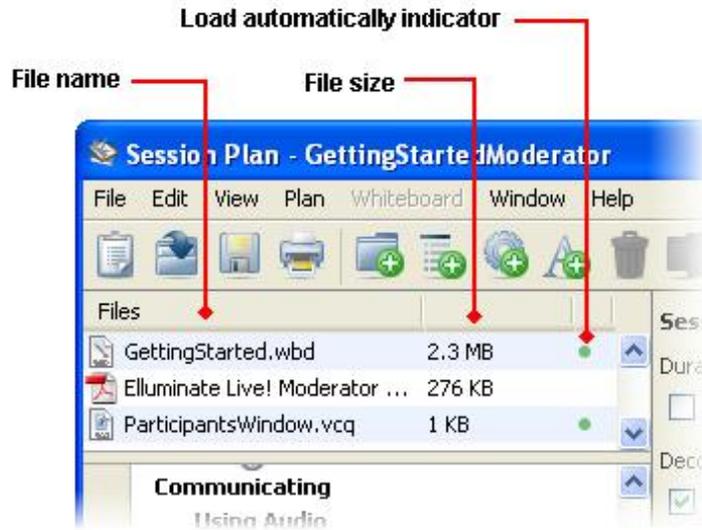
The Plan Editor Tool Bar

The command buttons in the Plan editor Tool bar are grouped according to function:
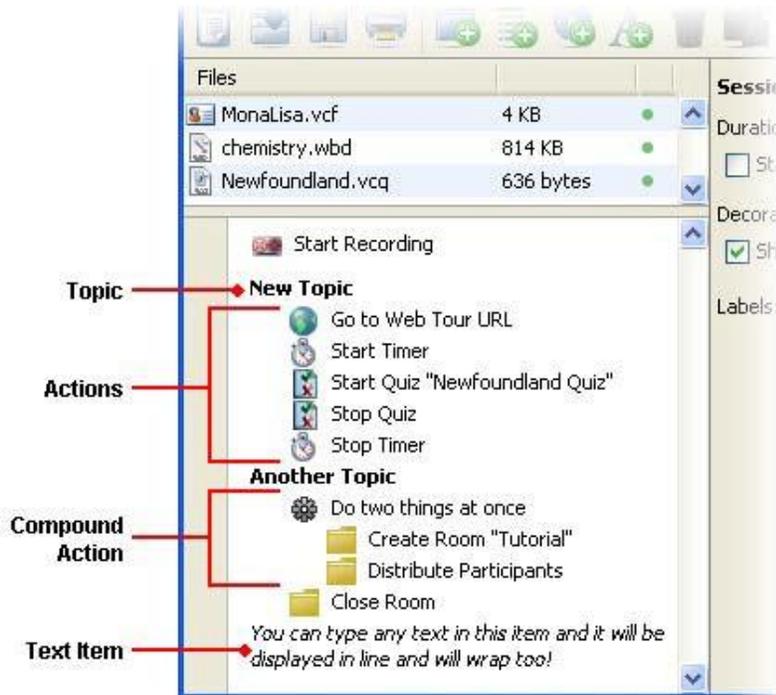
The Embedded Files List

The Embedded Files list is a scrollable list of the files you have added to the session plan as embedded content.


The Plan Outline

The individual items within your Plan Outline can be easily identified. By default, Topics and Text Items are formatted (**bold** and *italic*, respectively) and Actions have distinct icons.

The Whiteboard Editor

You can load an existing whiteboard file created in Blackboard Collaborate or create a new one in the Whiteboard editor of Elluminate *Plan!* and then load it into the session plan. This window provides the full functionality of the Blackboard Collaborate whiteboard within Elluminate *Plan!*
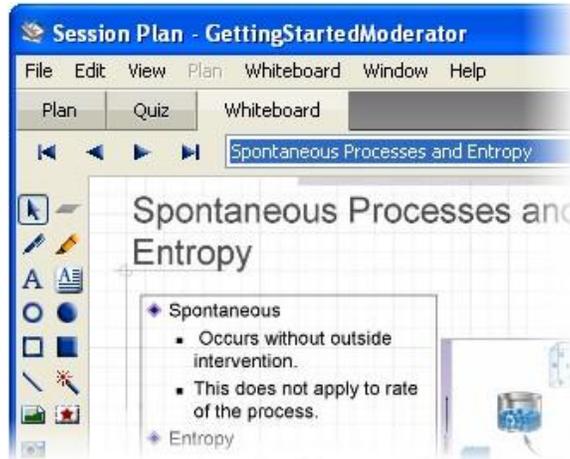
The Quiz Editor

If you wish to include a Quiz in your session plan, you can load an existing quiz file created in Blackboard Collaborate or create a new one in the Quiz editor of Elluminate *Plan!* and then load it into the session plan. The Quiz editor provides the full functionality of the Quiz Manager within Blackboard Collaborate.
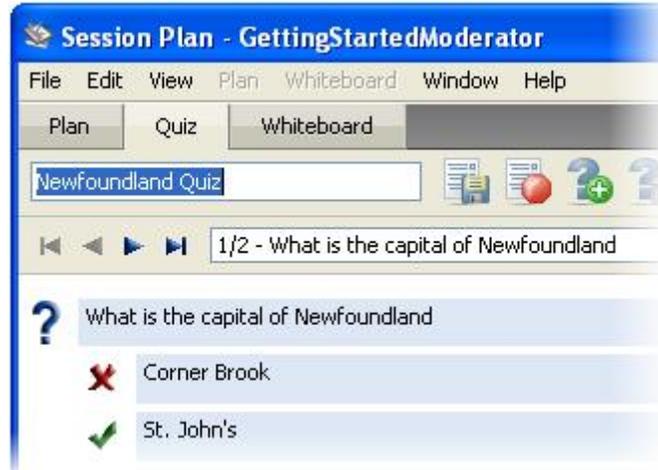
Creating a Session Plan

As you create your content, Elluminate *Plan!* constantly validates your changes while you work to ensure you have entered Actions in a logical fashion, that required properties have been entered (and are valid) and that embedded files have been loaded.

Adding Topics

Topics provide structure and context to your session plan. A topic has a name and, optionally, can contain presenter notes and a suggested duration. Topics can contain other session plan items: other Topics (subtopics), Actions and Text Items.

To create a Topic, do the following:

1.   Select the item in the Plan Outline after which you would like to insert a new Topic. If you do not select an existing item, the new Topic will be appended to the end of the session plan.

2.   Add a Topic by doing one of the following:

   o   Select Plan > Add Topic.
   o   Click on the ⊞ **Add Topic** button in the Tool bar.

The Properties panel will display Topic-related fields and functions.
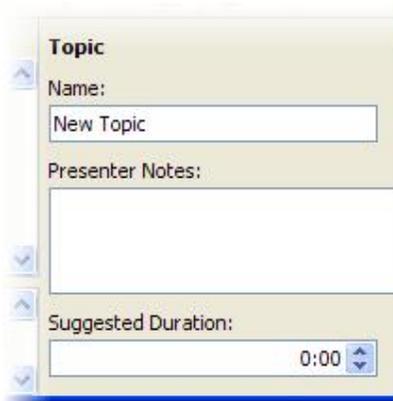
3.   You can type presenter notes for the Topic. Presenter notes are not displayed in the outline of the session plan. They are shown in the bottom of the session plan while it is running in Blackboard Collaborate and appear to Moderators only.

4.   You can set a suggested duration for the Topic. This is just a suggested time that presenters can use to pace themselves – nothing will occur when the duration timer has run its course.

You can create any number of topics and organize them as subtopics. There are two ways to do this:

   •   Select an existing topic and add a new topic. The new topic will be added as a subtopic of the selected one. Whenever a topic is selected, any new item (Topic, Action or Text Item) added to the outline will be inserted as a "child" of the topic.

   •   Move an existing topic under another topic and indent it.

In Blackboard Collaborate, only one duration timer can run at a time. If you move to a sub-item that also has a timer, the sub-item's timer will start running only if its parent's timer (or another sub-item's timer) has stopped.

Adding Content Files

To use pre-existing content (whiteboard, multimedia, quiz or other files) in your session plan, you must embed the content file into Elluminate *Plan!* :

- Add the file directly to the Embedded Files list: when you add the file this way, you will need to manually create any desired file-related Actions for that file in the Plan Outline.
- Add the file to the Plan Outline: when you add the file this way, you automatically will be creating a file-related Action in the Plan Outline and also will be adding the file to the Embedded Files list.
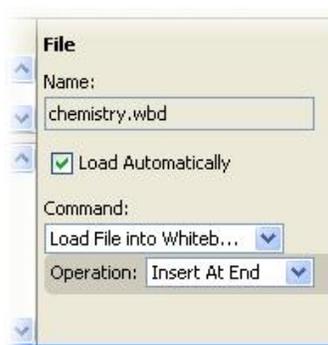
Adding a Whiteboard File

You can add an existing whiteboard file created in Blackboard Collaborate or create a new one in the Whiteboard editor of Elluminate *Plan!*

Step 1: Embed the file.

To add a whiteboard file to your session plan, select a whiteboard (.wbd or .wbp) file from your file browser by doing one of the following:

- Select Plan > Add File.
- Click on the 🗋 **Embed File** button in the Tool bar.
- Drag and drop a whiteboard file from your file browser into the Embedded Files list.
- Drag and drop a whiteboard file from your file browser into the Plan Outline (thus creating a file-related Action for each whiteboard screen). The file will also be added to the Embedded Files list.

The Properties panel will display Embedded Files-related fields and functions.

Step 2: Specify the file properties.

The whiteboard file properties are used to specify whether or not you would like the whiteboard screens loaded automatically when the session plan is first activated in the Blackboard Collaborate session and, if so, where those screens should be placed.

Name: This is a read-only field containing the name of your embedded whiteboard file.

Load Automatically: By default, this option is turned on. It will load the file automatically when the session plan is first activated in the Blackboard Collaborate session. (A green dot in the Embedded Files list indicates this option is turned on for this file.) If the option is turned off, in order for the presenter to load the file manually during the Elluminate *Live* session, you need to add a *Load File into Whiteboard* Action to your session plan. The presenter can simply select the Action during the session to load the whiteboard screens.

Command: By default, set to *Load File into Whiteboard*.

- *Load File for Transfer* – if selected, when the session plan is first activated in the Blackboard Collaborate session, the whiteboard file will be loaded into your file transfer library, ready for sharing with session attendees. The screens will not be loaded into Blackboard Collaborate*'s* whiteboard.
- *Prompt Participants* – if selected, when you carry out a file transfer, session attendees will be asked if they would like to receive the file transfer. If you de-select *Prompt Participants,* you can still prompt participants to save the file for transfer later on by inserting the *Prompt to Save File* Action.

- *Load File into Whiteboard* – if selected, when the session plan is first activated in the Blackboard Collaborate session, all the whiteboard screens will be loaded into the session. This command has the following options:

Select one of the following *Operation* options to specify where you would like the new whiteboard screens placed. The default is *Insert At End*.
- o *Replace All Screens* – select this option to have the screens in this whiteboard file replace all screens currently loaded in the whiteboard.
- o *Insert After Screen* – select this option to insert the screens in this whiteboard file after the current screen of the currently loaded whiteboard file.
- o *Insert At End* – select this option to have the screens in this whiteboard file be inserted after the last screen of the currently loaded whiteboard file.

You also can load PowerPoint or OpenOffice.org presentations, PDF files or image files as whiteboard (.wbd) files.
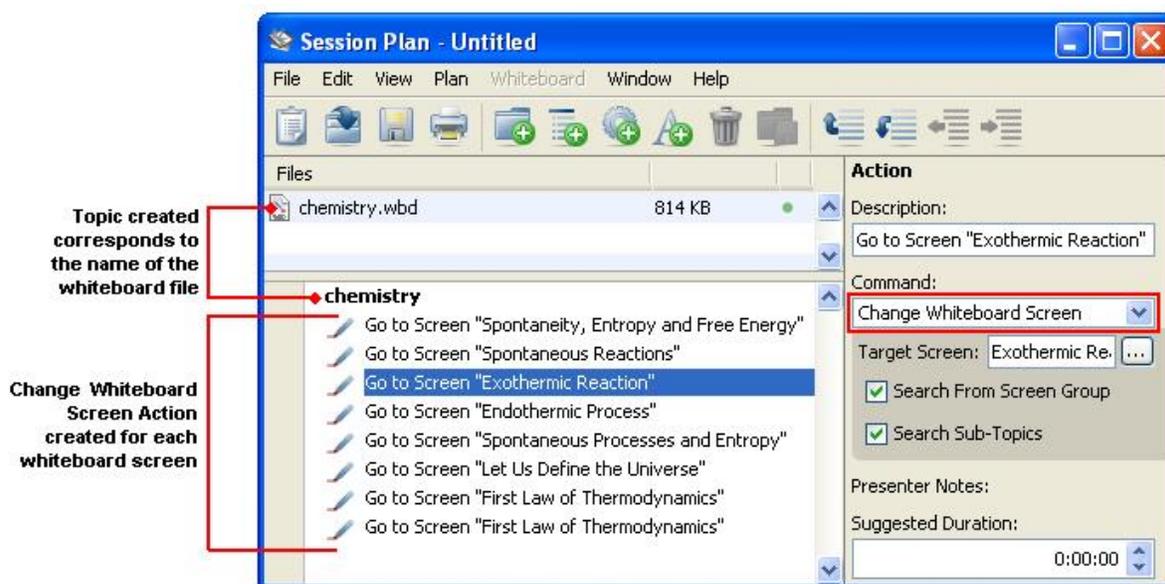
Step 3: Add related Actions.

If you added the whiteboard file via the Embedded Files list (rather than directly into the Plan Outline), there will be no whiteboard file-related Actions in the Plan Outline. If you would like to create a *Change Whiteboard Screen* Action (called *Go to Screen)* for each screen in the whiteboard file, copy and paste or drag and drop the file from the Embedded Files list into the Plan Outline. In addition to the *Change Whiteboard Screen* (*Go to Screen*) Actions, a Topic (of the same name as the whiteboard file) automatically will be added above the first *Change Whiteboard Screen* Action.

When you run the session plan in Blackboard Collaborate and select a *Go to Screen* Action, you automatically will go

to the specified screen.

Adding a Quiz

You can add an existing quiz created in Blackboard Collaborate or create a new one in the Quiz editor of Elluminate *Plan!* and then embed it into the session plan.

- **Step 1: Embed the file:** The Properties panel will display Embedded Files-related fields and functions.

- **Step 2: Specify the file properties.**
- **Step 3: Add related Actions:** To use the quiz file in the Blackboard Collaborate session, add quiz-related Actions (*Load Quiz*, *Start Quiz* and *Stop Quiz*) or a file transfer Action (*Load File for Transfer*) to the Plan Outline. Because a quiz (.vcq) file can contain more than one quiz, when defining a *Start Quiz* Action, be sure to enter the name of the desired quiz in the *Quiz Name* field.

Adding Multimedia

- **Step 1: Embed the file:** WMV, MPEG, MP3, QuickTime or Flash file. The Properties panel will display Embedded Files-related fields and functions.
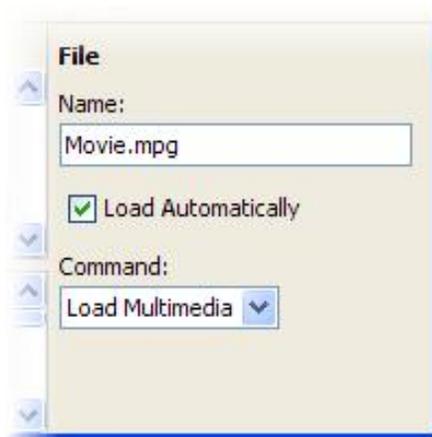
- **Step 2: Specify the file properties.**
- **Step 3: Add related Actions.**

Adding Actions

Actions include a description and a command that will be triggered in Blackboard Collaborate. An Action can contain presenter notes and a suggested duration.

1. Add the Action to the Plan Outline using one of the following methods:
   a. **Copy an existing Action** using Ctrl+C and paste it to the new location using Ctrl+V.
   b. Use the Add Action menu.
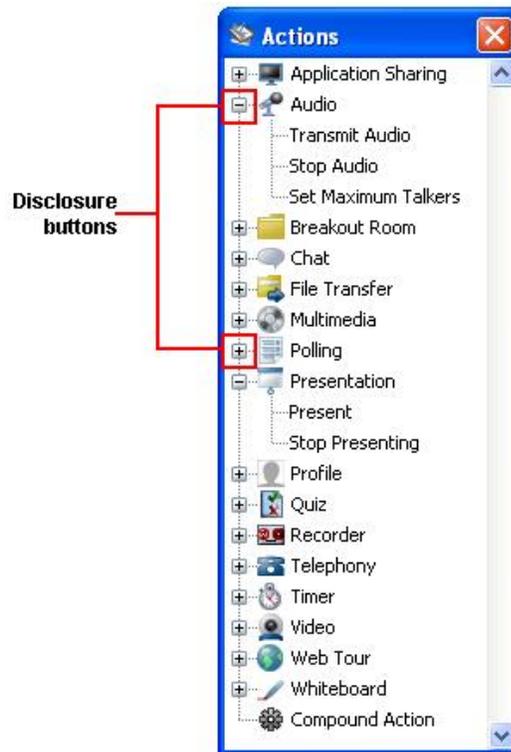

   i. Select the Action in the Plan Outline after which you would like the new Action placed.

   ii. Click on the **Add Action** button to open the Add Action Menu and select the desired Action.

   c. **Use the Add Action dialog.** This dialog will close when you have added an Action.
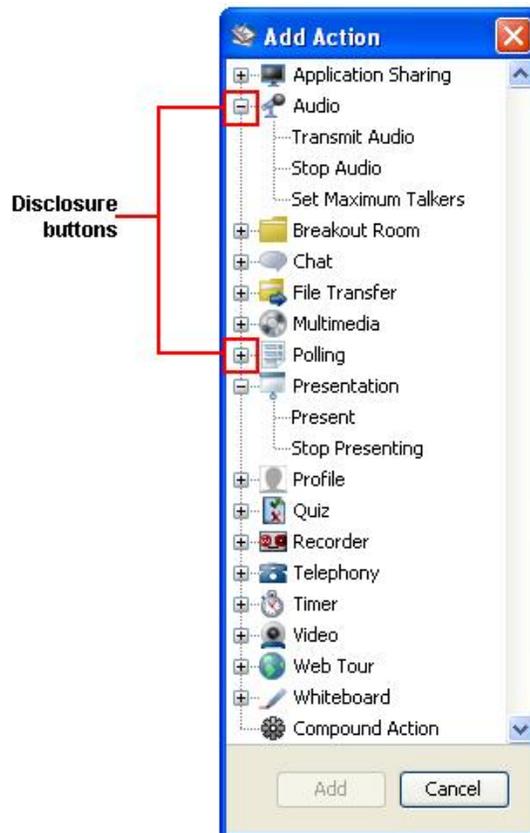
   i. Select the Action in the Plan Outline after which you would like the new Action placed.

   ii. Open the Add Action Dialog in one of the following ways:
      1. Select Plan > Add Action
      2. Enter Ctrl+G
      3. Select Add Action from the context menu

   iii. Select the desired Action.

   iv. Click on the **Add** button or double-click on the desired Action.

d. **Use the Action Palette.** This palette will stay open for the duration of your editing session or until you explicitly close it.

e. Open the Action Palette in one of the following ways:
   i. Select Window > Actions – Action Palette
   ii. Click on Add Action button and select Open Action Palette from Add Action menu – Action Palette
f. Add the Action in one of the following ways:
g. Drag and drop the desired Action to the desired location in the Plan Outline.
h. Select the Action in the Plan Outline beneath which you would like your new Action placed. Double-click on the new Action in the palette.

The Properties panel will display Action-related fields and functions.

2. Modify the Description for the Action or keep the default description given. For example, a description of "Play Lab Safety Video" is considerably more informative to a presenter (and anyone who can view the session plan) than "Play Multimedia".
3. Change the Command, if desired. You can do so by selecting a different command from the Command dropdown menu.
4. Set the Command parameters in the Properties panel.
5. Type presenter notes for the Action. Presenter notes are not displayed in the outline of the session plan. They appear to Moderators only.
6. Set a suggested duration for the Action. This is just a suggested time that presenters can use to pace themselves – nothing will occur when the timer has run its course.

Adding Text Items

A Text Item contains a simple text string. Optionally, it may contain a suggested duration. Long Text Items will wrap in the Plan Outline.

1. Select the item in the Plan Outline after which you would like to insert a new Text Item.
2. Add a Text Item by doing one of the following:
   - Select Plan > Add Text Item.
   - Click on the **Add Text Item** button in the Tool bar.
   - Right-click (Ctrl-Click on Mac) on the selected item and select Add Text Item from the context menu.
   - Copy an existing Text Item using Ctrl+C and paste it to the new location using Ctrl+V.

The Properties panel will display Text Item-related fields and functions.
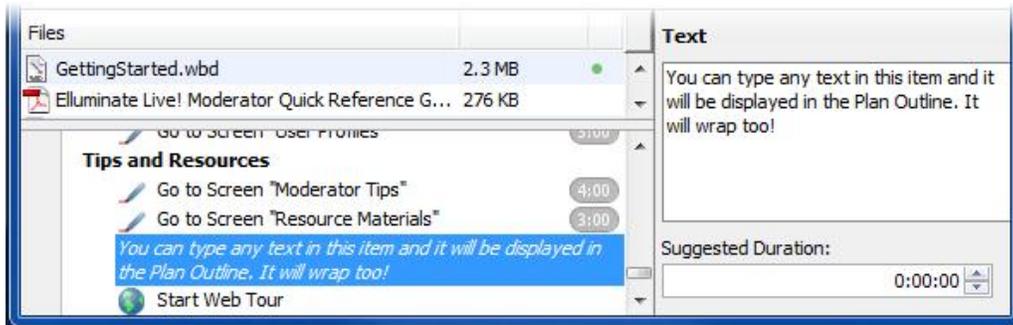
3. Type the desired text.

4. You can set a suggested duration for the Text Item. This is just a suggested time – nothing will occur when the timer has run its course.

Creating Compound Actions

To group Actions together into Compound Actions, do the following:

1. Select *Compound Action* from the Add Action menu, the Add Action dialog or the Action Palette. The Properties panel will display Action-related fields and functions.
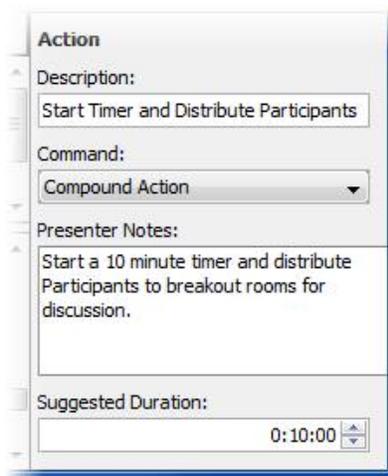
2. Enter a meaningful Description for the Compound Action, preferably one that reflects what Actions will be included in this Compound Action.

3. You can type presenter notes for the Compound Action. Presenter notes are not dis- played in the outline of the session plan. They are shown in the bottom of the session plan while it is running in Blackboard Collaborate and appear to Moderators only.

4. You can set a suggested duration for the Compound Action. This is just a suggested time that presenters can use to pace themselves – nothing will occur when the duration timer has run its course.

5. Be sure the Compound Action is selected and then add the Actions to be inserted as sub- Actions of the Compound Action. The sub-Actions will automatically be indented under the Compound Action and become part of it.

Renaming Items

To change the name of an item in the Plan Outline, select the item and change the text in the Properties panel: in the *Name* field for Topics, *Description* field for Actions and *Text* field for text. Files in the Embedded Files list cannot be renamed.

Moving Items and Embedded Files

When you have created the items in your Plan Outline, you may want to reorder them (move them up or down) or create a hierarchy of items by promoting and demoting items (moving them left or right). To do so, do one of the following:

- Use the Move buttons in the Tool bar (as shown at the right).

- Use the Plan menu options: Move Up, Move Down, Move Left and Move Right.

- Drag and drop items (to move up or down only)

- Cut the item using Ctrl+X and paste it to the new location using Ctrl+V

- Use the keyboard shortcuts:
  Ctrl+Up (⌘↑ on Mac)
  Ctrl+Down (⌘↓ on Mac)
  Ctrl+Left (⌘← on Mac)
  Ctrl+Right (⌘→ on Mac).
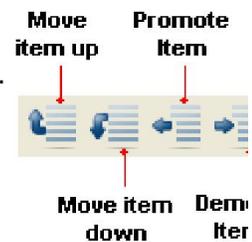
Removing Items and Embedded Files

To remove a file from the Embedded Files list, select the file and do one of the following:

- Select Plan > Remove.
- Click on the Remove 🗑 button in the Tool bar.
- Press the **Delete** or **Backspace** key.
- Right-click (Ctrl-Click on Mac) on the file to be removed and select Remove from the context menu.

Saving a Session Plan

Session plans are saved in *Elluminate Plan!* as .elpx files, which are loaded into and run within Blackboard Collaborate sessions. All the session content (whiteboard files, files for transfer, multimedia files and quizzes) is embedded in the .elpx file, along with the Plan Outline (which consists of Topics, Text Items and Actions).

When you save a session plan (.elpx) file, the contents of the Plan Outline and all embedded files are saved, along with all session plan properties and preference settings. To save a session plan (.elpx) file, do one of the following:

o   Select File > Save.

o   Click on the 🔳 **Save** button in the Tool bar.

Loading Session Plans into the Library

To use a session plan in a Blackboard Collaborate session, you must first add it to the Session Plan Library. You can load session plans into the Session Plan Library at any time during a Black- board Collaborate session. When you do so, Blackboard Collaborate will upload the session plan file to the server before adding it to the library.

To manually load a session plan into a Blackboard Collaborate session, open it by doing one of the following:

❖ Open a session plan from within the Session Plan Library:

   o   Click on the 📩 **Open** button in the Session Plan Library's toolbar.

   o   Select a session plan file from your file browser's Open dialog.

❖ Open a session plan using the File menu.

   o   From the File menu, select Open > Session Plan.

   o   Select a session plan file from your file browser's Open dialog.

Removing Session Plans from the Library

To remove a session plan from the library, select the plan and click on the 🗑 **Remove** button in the Session Plan Library toolbar. If the session plan you are removing is currently active, it will be deactivated.

Running a Session Plan

The process of running a session plan typically involves the presenter navigating through the Plan Outline from top to bottom using the mouse, keyboard shortcuts, arrow buttons or Black- board Collaborate menu commands.