



Elluminate *Plan!*[™]

What's next in the Instructional Cycle

A solution brief
August, 2010



Engage. Enlighten. **Elluminate.**

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Challenges in expanding the adoption of real-time collaboration

Today, academic institutions and training organizations are placing an increasingly important emphasis on the value of real-time collaboration across the enterprise. Wide adoption of live online teaching, learning, and collaboration is now an important part of the 21st century educational environment.

Institutions of all types and size are adding real-time online collaboration into the mix for K-12, higher education, and corporate environments. Whether for office hours, direct instruction, language labs, faculty or employee training, virtual campus visits, special guest lecturers, international symposia, or even socialization – real-time interaction over the Internet is here, proven, and growing.

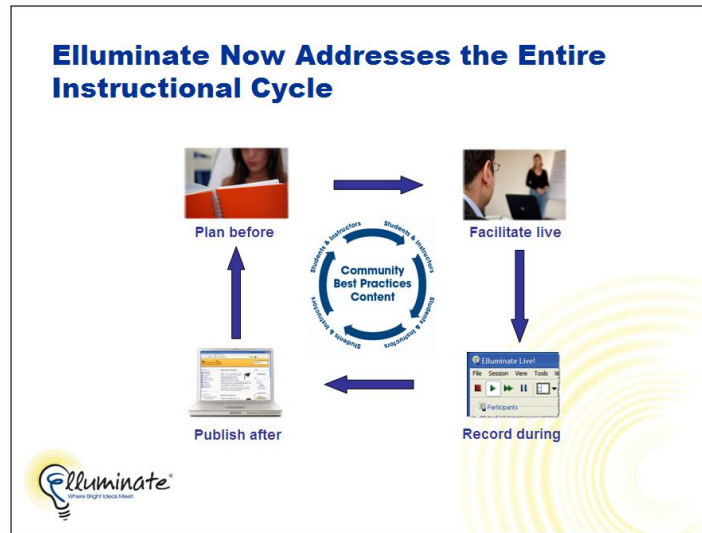
Although the desired outcome is obviously a more effective use of real-time collaboration in education across a wider number and variety of constituencies, some challenges to wider adoption persist.

- **Students:** How can students in a real-time virtual classroom consistently feel more as if they are part of the learning process instead of being “talked at” by an instructor? How can students become more active learners when they are online?
- **Administrators and educational:** How can administrators expand the use of live eLearning and real-time collaboration (RTC) system wide. And how can they leverage institutional expertise and limited teaching resources?
- **Academic technologists:** How can technical staff move away from handholding and create more independence across a wider variety of instructors? How can institutions meet the needs of the digital generation for anywhere, anytime access?
- **CIOs and other educational executives:** How can the organization ensure that its investments, made on the recommendations and experiences of instructional leadership, will be most effectively implemented across a wide variety of staff and faculty?
- **Instructors and course developers:** How can well-designed, real-time courses be reliably replicated by multiple instructors? How can online collaborations be executed more interactively and become less like “sage-on-a-stage,” audio-annotated slideshows?

Real-time collaboration as the focus of the instructional cycle

Before looking at how to improve RTC in education, let's establish it as a key tenet of learning. Ask yourself the following questions: Do you remember the title and author of a textbook you used in secondary school? Do you remember the name of a favorite teacher and an important thing he or she helped you learn?

Most can't answer the first question. Many open up at the latter question, often gushing memories of lessons and teachers in great detail. This is because beyond the need for content, lessons, self-study, exercises, and tests, there is the human need for the guidance and connection of a facilitator, a mentor, or teacher to help guide you – and help you guide yourself.



The instructional cycle

As illustrated above, the core of the eLearning instructional cycle is community, and best practices, and content. Surrounding that center is a necessary focus on planning the content and interaction, collaborating in real time, capturing those interactions, and publishing them for later reference.

What's next?

With the proliferation of the use of the virtual classroom for real-time collaboration, the question arises: What's next? A never-before-addressed, yet crucial part, of the cycle is now available from Elluminate—the planning of detailed content and interactions for future, real-time instructor facilitated sessions. What's next is Elluminate *Plan!*TM

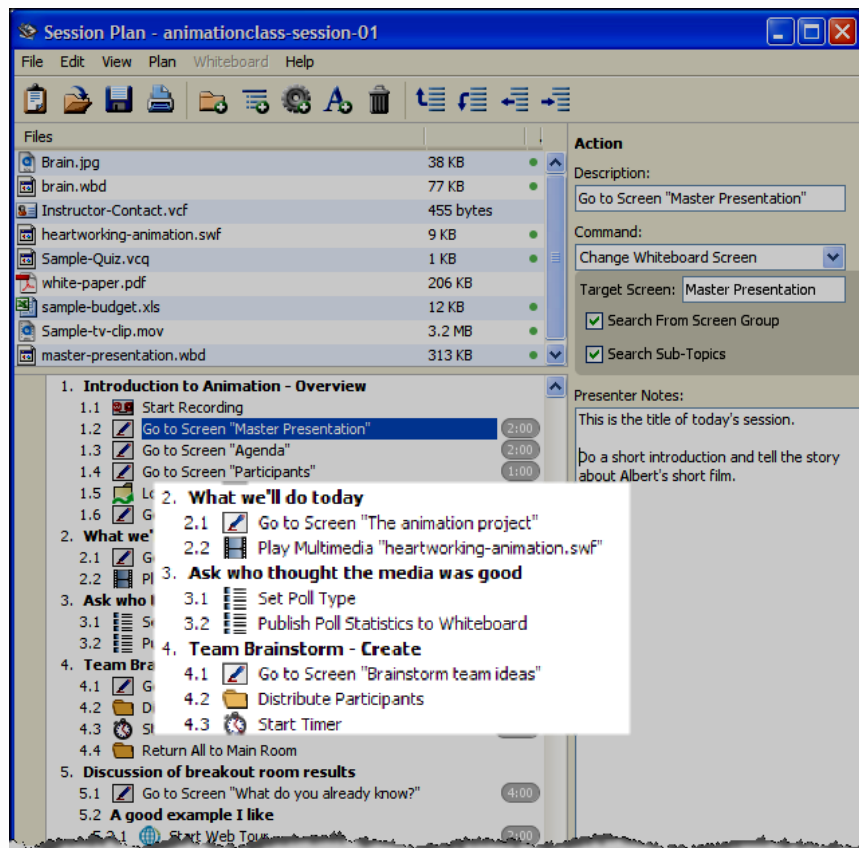
A framework for instructor-led, real-time collaboration

Elluminate *Plan!* enhances the power of real-time collaboration by allowing content and interaction to be packaged and scripted prior to the real-time session. Then, during the real-time Elluminate *Live!*® session, the moderator executes the pre-planned content and activities. In addition, the moderator can deviate from and return to the plan as needed.

Unlike other “learning objects” that are designed for an individual’s self-paced viewing, Elluminate plan files encapsulate the content and actions – the nouns and the verbs – ahead of time specifically for future use in a multi-user, instructor-led, real-time eLearning setting.

For example, the screen below shows how the future activities for the first session of an animation seminar are planned in advance. The highlighted areas focus on some of the Elluminate tools and related content that will be invoked and used by the facilitator of the live session.

This figure shows the Elluminate *Plan!* desktop client, which runs on Windows, Mac, Linux, or Solaris platforms. This client is transparent to the students, and this offline tool also may never be seen by certain instructors. Those who merely want to load and execute Elluminate plans in the virtual classroom as an instructor, rather than serve as course designers, needn’t ever see this environment.



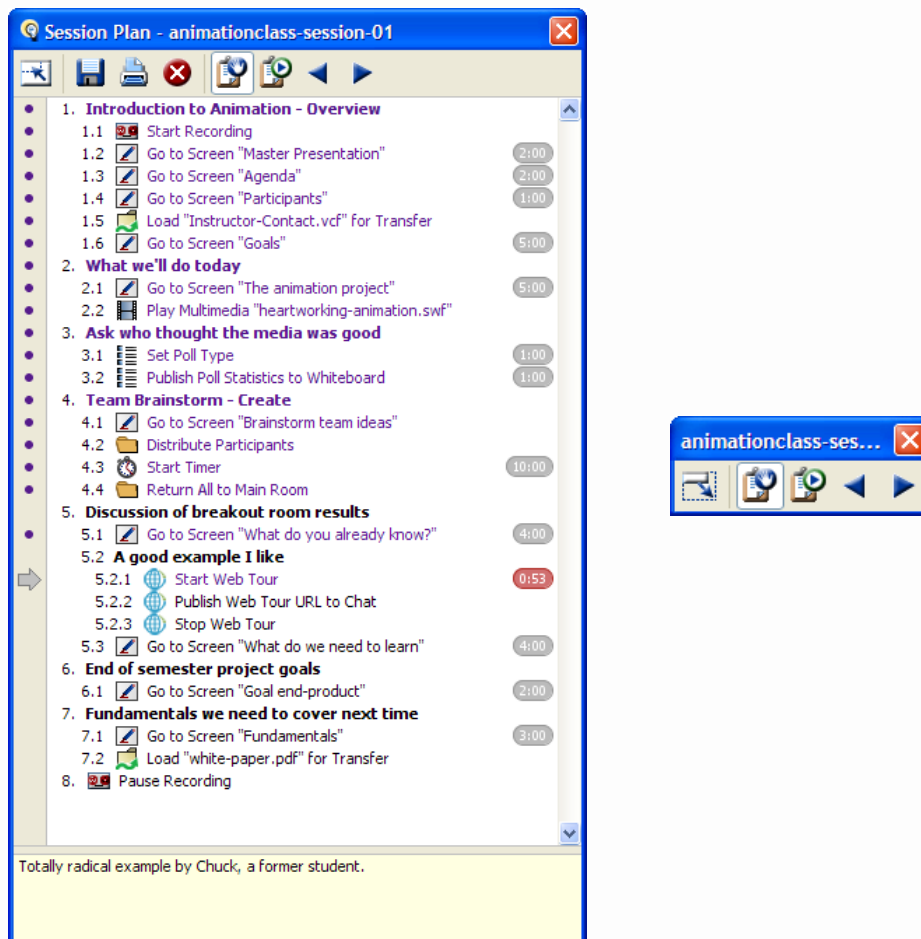
Actions planned for the future

What instructors see when Elluminate *Live!* is in session

When Elluminate *Live!* is in session, you can load and activate an Elluminate plan .elp file. Then, you are presented with a new Elluminate window that allows you to step through each part of the Elluminate plan merely by clicking the next button. The figure below shows the additional user interface element that you see during the session, with the full hierarchical view and speakers' notes and the mini-controller view on the right.

Using these new interface elements, you can step through simple or complex content and interactions, without having to turn focus away from interacting with the students. Actions like creating breakout rooms, visiting websites, starting quizzed, executing polls, starting and stopping the timer or the session recorder, and even sharing an application, desktop, or area of the desktop can all be planned prior to the session.

During the session, you can step through the content and activities in the session one at a time. However, you also have the flexibility to deviate from the plan at any point in and return to the plan once the deviation is complete. Suggested times for each topic are displayed, and notes, both within the hierarchy and as speaker's notes, appear in the Session Plan window. The window also shows which topics have been covered and which have yet to be covered.



An Elluminate plan running in an Elluminate Live! session - full and mini session plan views

What students/participants see when a plan is running in Elluminate *Live!*

From a student or participant's perspective, they see nothing new—neither the Elluminate *Plan!* authoring tool nor the Session Plan window. Their user interface is unchanged. The only difference is that the session will be better run and more interactive, and the instructor can have more focus on the content and interaction.

Advantages of Elluminate *Plan!*

Adding Elluminate *Plan!* to the instructional cycle brings many advantages to your educational enterprise.

Although Elluminate *Live!* is not difficult to master, the use of Elluminate *Plan!* allows additional focus on presenting the materials and facilitating interaction. For example, something as simple as remembering to web tour to a specific web site may be overlooked in an Elluminate *Live!* session due to nervousness or misplaced paper notes. However, with an Elluminate session plan, that web tour is built into the interaction plan and can't be missed.

Elluminate *Plan!* allows real-time courses to be shared and reused. The educational enterprise can profit from this by being able to consistently deliver the same level of instruction and interaction across classes without having staff have to repeatedly re-invent the wheel.

From a professional development and course designer perspective, online instructors with less experience in making RTC highly interactive and effective can benefit from Elluminate *Plan!* They can execute well constructed, highly interactive plans created by other more experienced course designers or instructors. They can also use the Elluminate *Plan!* editing environment to examine and learn from or modify existing plans to better suite their needs.

Elluminate *Plan!* also supports Elluminate's accessibility imperative. PowerPoint slide content imported into *Plan!* is accessible from the Elluminate *Live!* Activity Window when you run the session plan. The Activity Window is a scrolling timeline that consolidates and displays all in-session activity, including slide content, participant actions such as raised/lowered hand and microphone on/off, and allows users to enter interaction commands via a command-line interface. Users who are blind or have low vision can access the Activity Window content using a screen reader like JAWS. Allowing you to organize and package content with Elluminate *Plan!* demonstrates our commitment to our core *No User Left Behind*[™] philosophy.

How to leverage plans throughout the instructional cycle

The instructional cycle of plan, deliver, and archive is enhanced by having a formal planning tool to use with your real-time sessions. You and your peers can examine recordings of previously executed sessions and update plans based on what you've learned works effectively.

Plans can be co-developed by peers in a live collaboration session by discussing and experimenting in real-time and then adding them (or not adding them) to the plan you are application sharing in real time. In addition, the Elluminate plan files can be part of your eLearning enterprise by being stored for later execution in your LMS/CMS systems, portals, or network resources.

How Elluminate plan .elp files work

The artifact of the Elluminate *Plan!* desktop application is an Elluminate plan .file with an .elp extension. This single file contains all the content, actions, and comments, and speaker's notes you created within the session. The file contents are automatically compressed with industry leading algorithms for optimum size and can be stored on a network resource, LMS/CMS system, CD-ROM, or hard drive for later execution.

When instructors are logged into any Elluminate *Live!* session, they can load an .elp file, activate it, and use it to run the session. The real-time session can be held in Elluminate vRoom™, Elluminate vOffice™, Elluminate vClass™, or Elluminate *Live!* version 8.5 or higher.

For more information

For more information, please email us at info@illuminate.com, or visit us on the web at www.illuminate.com. You may also contact Elluminate by phone at 1-866-GO-ELLUM (463-5586). For a free, 30-day trial of Elluminate *Plan!* [click here](#).

About Elluminate, Inc.

Elluminate, Inc. delivers web, audio, video, and social networking solutions for teaching, learning, and collaboration in the 21st century. Designed specifically for educators, the company's Elluminate Learning Suite™, intelligent LMS/CMS integrations, and low-cost starter products support the entire instructional cycle – what happens before, during, and after the live online session.

Elluminate's "learning-edge" solutions take educators beyond the interactive virtual classroom with tools for session planning and post-session content distribution. The company's products integrate seamlessly with existing applications in the academic infrastructure and scale easily from department or campus level to complex, multi-campus enterprise-wide deployments. Welcome to EDU 2.0.