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LINKS Instructor Resources

There are many PPT slide decks in the LINKS Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website. These PPT slide decks include Discussion Cases, introductory materials, mid-event materials, and end-of-event materials, among other things. LINKS instructors who haven't had a look at the LINKS Instructor Resources for a while might find it helpful to review these PPT slide decks.

Access the evolving LINKS Instructor Resources via the LINKS webpage.

Instructors are invited to e-mail Randy Chapman (Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com) to obtain the case-sensitive instructor access parameters (username and password) for the LINKS Instructor Resources.

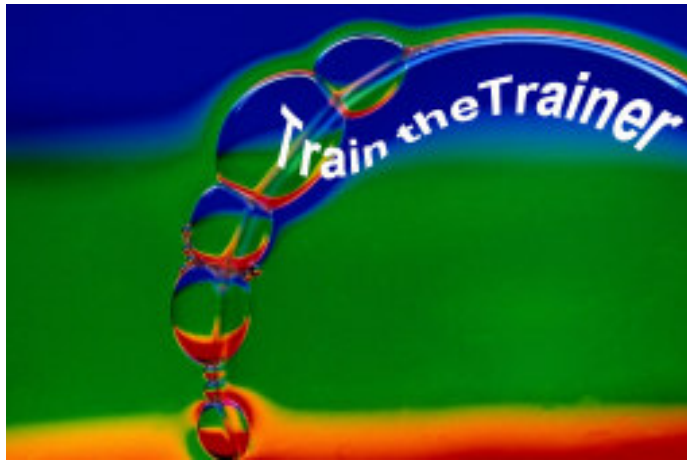
Game Run Schedules With Embargos

In processing LINKS game runs, our normal administrative protocol is that the results are "publicized" immediately after the game run is executed. "Publicized" includes uploading the new results to the LINKS web-server and sending e-mail to everyone in a LINKS industry (students and the instructor) to announce the availability of the new game run results. For most LINKS instructors, immediate game run processing and turnaround after the input submission deadline is desirable.

It is possible to "embargo" the availability of LINKS results until an instructor-specified time after the input submission deadline and subsequent game run. With an embargo, LINKS is run in the normal fashion (normally within two hours of the input submission deadline) and the LINKS results are uploaded to the web server so that the LINKS

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LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars

● August 18-20 ● September 22-24

LINKS Simulations Immersion Experience

Five Teleconferences and a Four-Round LINKS Simulation Event

Registration is available for the next three-day, intensive-mode Train-The-Trainer distance-learning seminars for the LINKS simulations. Randy Chapman, the LINKS author, leads these distance-learning events for academic faculty interested in learning more about teaching with LINKS. This intensive-mode seminar format includes 5-6 hours of work per day during the three days of the distance-learning seminar.

LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminars are offered for the enterprise management, marketing, services, and supply chain management LINKS variants.

Current LINKS instructors are invited to pass along this announcement to faculty colleagues and

advanced doctoral students who might be interested in learning more about teaching with LINKS.

Experienced LINKS instructors sometimes participate in a LINKS Train-The-Trainer Seminar to refresh their memories of LINKS details just prior to teaching with LINKS or to explore another LINKS simulation variant for a future teaching activity. Such experienced LINKS instructors may elect just to participate in the TTT's four-round simulation event, ignoring the public teleconferences included in the LINKS TTT program. (PowerPoint decks are e-mailed to all LINKS TTT participants before each teleconference, so such experienced LINKS instructors may freely choose to participate in all, some, or none of the teleconferences as per their availability and interest.)

Details about LINKS Train-The-Trainer seminars may be accessed via these URLs:

- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/EMttt.pdf> [Enterprise Management]
- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/MSttt.pdf> [Marketing]
- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/SMttt.pdf> [Services Marketing]
- <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/TTT/SCttt.pdf> [Supply Chain Management]

Did You Know?

LINKS Instructor's Manual -- Chapter 4: Course Flow

There are five absolute minimum essentials for teaching with LINKS:

1. LINKS students must pre-read the LINKS participant's manual before LINKS begins.
2. LINKS instructor form LINKS teams.
3. An in-class introduction of LINKS led by the LINKS instructor should take 30-45 minutes of classroom time.
4. The LINKS instructor creates and publishes a LINKS game run schedule which is followed throughout the LINKS event.
5. A final in-class debriefing concludes a LINKS event. Typically in one of two forms:
 - An instructor-led debriefing (30-45 minutes of classroom time).
 - Final formal team-based presentations (75-90 minutes of classroom time).LINKS instructors might follow-up such presentations with concluding remarks.

Chapter 4 outlines a variety of “recommended” and “optional” LINKS-related activities, exercises, and student reports that might be included with a complete LINKS exercise. While no single course will ever use all of these, the full inventory of possibilities is documented in the LINKS Instructor's Manual to provide LINKS instructors with a convenient, single-source menu table from which to choose, organized in time-sequence format. It's good for you to know!



If you Google “links simulations,” what’s the first listing?

Schedules With Embargos

Continued from page 1

instructor has immediate access to the results. However, embargoed results are not available to students until the instructor-specified embargo time.

Embargoing is useful for instructors who wish to release results only after a class has concluded (for example, to retain students' undivided attention throughout the class) or for instructors wishing to have early access to the results, before their students can access the results.

To embargo results, encode your embargo schedule within the game run schedule that you submit before your LINKS event begins.

Everyone in a LINKS industry always receives an e-mail announcement of the availability of new results immediately after a game run has been executed, regardless of whether embargoed results exist. And, embargoed results are “immediately” uploaded to the LINKS Simulation Database after a game run. However, students can't access embargoed results until the specified embargo time limit has passed because the results' links are inactive until that time.

Instructor-Optional Switches

The LINKS simulations may be customized in many ways to fit an instructor's particular educational application. Customization is accomplished via a wide range of instructor-optional switches embedded into LINKS. Instructor-optional switches permit LINKS to be customized to fit an instructor's preferences and course requirements.

Instructor-optional switches embedded in the LINKS scenario files permit a wide range of optional LINKS capabilities to be enabled. Instructor-optional switches add to the richness and complexity of the LINKS experience. Generally, these switches may be engaged at initialization or after, at the LINKS instructor's option.

For **LINKS Products Simulations** instructors may increase:

- Simulation Complexity
- Product Development Complexity
- Procurement Complexity
- Manufacturing Complexity
- Transportation Complexity
- Service Complexity
- Generate Demand Complexity
- Financial Engineering Complexity
- Research Studies Resources
- Cost-Structure Complexity



Likewise, for **LINKS Services Simulations** instructors may increase:

- Simulation Complexity
- Service Design Complexity
- Marketing Complexity
- Add Financial Engineering Complexity
- Research Studies Resources
- Cost-Structure Complexity



Please contact Randy Chapman (Chapman@ChapmanRG.com) to discuss the strategic and tactical instructional implications associated with these instructor-optional switches. The LINKS Administrator manages these switch settings on the LINKS instructor's behalf.

Number of Teams and Team Size in LINKS Industries

Each LINKS industry can be configured with two to eight teams/firms with four to six teams/firms being recommended. With a very small number of teams, one firm's activities directly affect other team's results in a major and noticeable way. With many teams in a LINKS industry, each team is effectively competing against a larger mass of competitive effort, so the pattern of competition is typically not as noticeable.

Competition in six- to eight-firm LINKS industries is substantial, even overwhelming at times. Each firm has a difficult time in establishing and sustaining differential advantage. Also, competitive analysis is very demanding in such large industries. Multiple industries, each with fewer teams, seem preferable. For example, with a total of nine firms, LINKS industries of four and five teams might be employed.

Team sizes of four members appear to be a good choice. Four members are enough to do the LINKS work but not too many to cause significant group management problems. Groups of five are typically a better choice than groups of three, if you have a choice. However, for the smaller LINKS simulations (Enterprise Management, Marketing Principles, Positioning Strategy, Services Marketing, Services Operations Management, and Supply Chain Management Fundamentals), groups of size three are fine.

Team sizes of three-five students and four-six teams per LINKS industry serve most LINKS instructors well. True, the nature of the experience varies with team size, but there are no fundamental problems associated with teams as small as three or as large as six. As team size increases, team management issues assume greater importance. And, larger-sized teams create additional logistical problems involving conflict-free meeting times in academic degree-granting programs. Larger-sized teams do, of course, simulate project teams that

students will encounter in their everyday business life.

Several other considerations arise in choosing team sizes in LINKS:

- Team sizes, number of teams, and number of industries are interrelated. Smaller team sizes leads to more teams and possibly to more industries. In LINKS, any number of parallel and independent industries (each with two to eight firms) may be run simultaneously. However, larger-sized industries (with seven or eight firms) may be too competitively intense for some instructors' purposes. By using smaller teams and more of them, multiple industries with five to seven teams each might be created.

- In academic degree-granting programs, part-time students typically have more difficulty arranging conflict-free outside-of-class meeting times. This would argue for smaller-sized teams when part-time students are involved, compared to classes populated with full-time undergraduates or full-time MBAs.

- As a practical teaching matter, fewer teams and fewer industries are generally more time-efficient for course instructors. Thus, most instructors would probably have a natural bias toward larger-sized teams and fewer industries.

Clearly, there are a range of trade-offs associated with team sizes, number of firms, and number of industries. Randy Chapman aims for between five and seven teams per industry with teams of size four or five. He will generally increase team size to six members before going beyond seven firms per industry.

If you're planning to have major in-class final presentations (say, 12-15 minute presentations) after your LINKS event concludes, then a maximum of five firms per industry is recommended. More than five back-to-back presentations become boring for everyone in attendance!



Reminders

LINKS Passcode Retrieval:

Convenient LINKS passcode retrieval for a LINKS participant (student or instructor) is possible via the “Retrieve LINKS Passcode” link on the main LINKS webpage (<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>). Executing the “Retrieve LINKS Passcode” operation e-mails the firm’s passcode to the participant’s official e-mail address as currently recorded in the LINKS Simulation Database.

E-Mail Address Management:

LINKS instructors submit their students’ e-mail addresses (grouped into teams) as part of the information-set provided to initialize a LINKS industry. Often, these are institutional rather than personal e-mail addresses. Since some participants prefer to use a personal e-mail address rather than an institutional e-mail address for LINKS, it’s possible for participants to update their official e-mail address as recorded in the LINKS Simulation Database.

Participant updates of official e-mail addresses as recorded in the LINKS Simulation Database are possible only after initialization and publication (via e-mail to all team members) of each LINKS firm’s passcode. Using their LINKS firm’s passcode, LINKS participants may change their official LINKS e-mail address after LINKS initialization via the “E-Mail Address Management” button in the LINKS Simulation Database. Confirmations of e-mail address changes are e-mailed to the old and new e-mail addresses.

Student Payment Timing:

The published LINKS price (the discounted price) is in effect until the first round of LINKS is complete. Then, the price is increased 25%. This means that we can initialize your LINKS simulation event (and advance LINKS through to its normal starting point) and students can continue to pay at the discounted price until the first scheduled round is run. Before initialization can occur, we do need to receive your game-run schedule and the students’ e-mail addresses (grouped into teams).

It is not necessary for your students to pay before LINKS begins to have access to the discounted LINKS price. Students must only pay before the first official game run on your game-run schedule to receive the discounted price. Thus, student payments can occur simultaneously with the beginning of your LINKS simulation event.

Student payment with a personal credit card is via the “Pay For LINKS” link on the LINKS webpage.

As a practical matter, a final warning/reminder will be e-mailed to those students who haven’t paid by the first game run, before implementing the non-discounted price.

LINKS Website Resources:

LINKS website (<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>) links provide convenient access to all LINKS simulation variants, to the LINKS Simulation Database, to passcode-protected instructor resources, and to user interaction contact points such as "Pay For LINKS", "Payment Questions?", and "Retrieve LINKS Passcode".

Some LINKS Resources:

- **Printed Manuals:** All LINKS manuals are freely available for download via the LINKS website. However, some LINKS instructors prefer to have publication-quality printed manuals provided for all of their students, rather than relying on their students to individually download/print the participant's manual from the LINKS website. We're happy to provide this service for LINKS instructors. The all-inclusive additional cost for participant manuals varies from \$18/student to \$28/student depending on the LINKS simulations variant. We normally need three weeks advance notice to arrange for production and shipping (to the instructor) from our on-demand printer.

- **What's New Document:** Please access the following document at the case-sensitive URL <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/WhatsNew.pdf> to obtain a detailed listing of new updates/enhancements to LINKS. Experienced LINKS instructors should access this document several months before their next usage occasion, to review the updates/enhancements to LINKS since their last usage occasion.

- **LINKS Instructor Resources Access:** You may access the evolving LINKS Instructor Resources via the LINKS webpage. Contact Randy Chapman (Chapman@LINKS-simulations.com), the LINKS author, to obtain the relevant access parameters (username and passcode).



The LINKS-Simulations Newsletter is a monthly newsletter for current and prospective LINKS instructors and for LINKS friends. Please e-mail questions, comments, suggestions, and other contributions (e.g., LINKS teaching tips) to Winkler@LINKS-simulations.com.



Editor: Cyndy Winkler

Access this edition: <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/newsletter.pdf>

Access previous edition: <http://www.LINKS-simulations.com/newsletter-previous.pdf>



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