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DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE LINKS-BASED COURSE: ESSENTIAL, RECOMMENDED, AND OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

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"I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand." – Confucius

Essential, recommended, and optional elements in the design of LINKS-based courses are provided in this LINKS White Paper. More detail is accessible in the Instructor Resources section¹ of the LINKS website (<http://www.LINKS-simulations.com>) and in the **LINKS Instructor's Manual**.

Sample LINKS-related course syllabi for 7- and 14-week courses are provided below.² Then, recommended and optional LINKS-related course elements are outlined.

7-WEEK LINKS SYLLABUS

For a 7-week course, a smaller LINKS simulation would normally be used with a LINKS event schedule including 5-6 rounds. This syllabus (course schedule) only shows the LINKS simulation activities.

Week	In-Class Activities	Outside-of-Class Activities	Estimated Time
1			
2		Read LINKS Manual	2-3 hours
3	LINKS Introduction	1 st LINKS Decision Round	45 minutes 4-6 hours
4		2 nd LINKS Decision Round	3-5 hours
5	Private Presidential Reviews	3 rd LINKS Decision Round 4 th LINKS Decision Round	30 min./team 2-4 hours 2-4 hours
6	LINKS Presentation Briefing	5 th LINKS Decision Round Advice-To-My-Successor Memo	2-4 hours 15-20 minutes 2-4 hours
7	LINKS Presentations	Prepare LINKS Presentation	2-4 hours 1.5 hours

¹ The Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website includes a wide range of PPTs and related materials to support LINKS instructors throughout their courses.

² Many complete course syllabi from LINKS instructors are provided in the Instructor Resources section of the LINKS website.

In a 7-week course, these course evaluation (grading) elements might be included as 40% of the total course grade:

- Within-Simulation Performance (team-based), 10% of course grade.
- Advice-To-My-Successor Memo (individual), 15% of course grade: Specific, detailed, well-justified advice to your successor about a particular LINKS topic in a maximum 5-page [including all text/tables/charts/exhibits] single-spaced memo.
- LINKS Presentation (team-based), 15% of course grade: Possible topics include “A Strategic Challenge Facing Your LINKS Firm, Either Now or in the Very-Recent Past” or “Forward-Looking Business Plan For Your LINKS Firm.”

The remainder of the course grade (60%) would be based on non-LINKS elements.

14-WEEK LINKS SYLLABUS

Here’s an example of how a larger LINKS simulation might be included within a 14-week semester-long course.³ This syllabus (course schedule) only shows the LINKS simulation activities.

Week	In-Class Activities	Outside-of-Class Activities	Estimated Time
1			
2			
3			
4		Read LINKS Manual	2-3 hours
5	LINKS Introduction	1 st LINKS Decision Round	45 minutes 4-6 hours
6		2 nd LINKS Decision Round	3-5 hours
7	Private Presidential Reviews	3 rd LINKS Decision Round	30 min./team 2-4 hours
8		4 th LINKS Decision Round	2-4 hours
9	Private Presidential Reviews	Mid-Event Business Review	2-4 hours 30 min./team
10		5 th LINKS Decision Round 6 th LINKS Decision Round	2-4 hours 2-4 hours
11		7 th LINKS Decision Round	2-4 hours
12		8 th LINKS Decision Round Advice-To-My-Successor Memo	2-3 hours 3-6 hours
13	LINKS Presentation Briefing	Prepare LINKS Presentation	15-20 minutes 3-6 hours
14	LINKS Presentations		1.5 hours

³ An alternative 14-week syllabus might include a smaller LINKS simulation, a 5-6 round event, and be scheduled over the second-half of the course in much the same way as shown above in the 7-week LINKS syllabus.

In a 14-week course, these course evaluation (grading) elements might be included as 50% of the total course grade:

- Within-Simulation Performance (team-based), 10% of course grade.
- Mid-Event Business Review (team-based), 10% of course grade: “What are the three biggest problems your LINKS firm faces? Why are these important problems now? What are you planning to do about these problems?”
- Advice-To-My-Successor Memo (individual), 15% of course grade: Specific, detailed, well-justified advice to your successor about a particular LINKS topic in a maximum 5-page [including all text/tables/charts/exhibits] single-spaced memo.
- LINKS Presentation (team-based), 15% of course grade: Possible topics include “A Strategic Challenge Facing Your LINKS Firm, Either Now or in the Very-Recent Past” or “Forward-Looking Business Plan For Your LINKS Firm.”

The remainder of the course grade (50%) would be based on non-LINKS elements.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER LINKS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The following table provides a time-sequenced roadmap to the LINKS activities, exercises, and reports/presentations described in detail in the **LINKS Instructor’s Manual**. This time-sequenced roadmap spans the timeframe from “before LINKS begins” through to “after LINKS ends.”

Required elements are just that, required/essential. Recommended and optional elements may be used at the LINKS instructor’s discretion. No LINKS event includes all of these recommended/optional elements, but the complete list provides a “buffet” of possibilities.

<p>Before LINKS Begins</p>	<p>Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign LINKS Manual for pre-reading <p>Recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LINKS Quiz (after reading LINKS participant’s manual) [LINKS website] • Tutorial #1: P&L Statements [LINKS website] • Tutorial #4: Forecasting [LINKS website] <p>Optional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LINKS Signup Form [to provide background info for the instructor to form LINKS teams] • Channel-Specific Profitability Analysis [LINKS variants with multiple channels] <p>Optional [all LINKS marketing variants]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LINKS Case: Firm BAD2
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Throughout LINKS Events	<p>Recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential Review Meetings (30-minute private meetings with each LINKS firm) <p>Optional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Log Worksheet • Written Assignments and Examinations using multiple-choice question from LINKS Simulations Test Questions
Early In LINKS Events	<p>Recommended in Degree-Granting Academic Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firing Memo <p>Optional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classic LINKS Questions • Tutorial #3: Balance Sheets [LINKS website] <p>Optional [all LINKS products variants with product development decisions]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial #6: Reconfiguration [LINKS website] <p>Optional [LINKS Enterprise Management Simulation, LINKS Marketing Strategy Simulation, and LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial #5: Inventory or Emergency Production [LINKS website] <p>Optional [supply chain management variants]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial #2: Inventory Tracking [LINKS website] • Tutorial #7: Distribution Alternatives [LINKS website] • Tutorial #8: Postponed Production [LINKS website]
Mid-Stream During LINKS Events	<p>Recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT Analysis or Strategy Audit (includes SWOT Analysis) <p>Optional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan (For Second-Half of LINKS) • Marketing Management In-Basket Exercise [LINKS Marketing Strategy Simulation]
After LINKS Ends	<p>Recommended in Degree-Granting Academic Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual LINKS Memo • Peer Evaluation: Special LINKS Management Bonus <p>Recommended [Final Presentation/Report Possibilities]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible Focus: Forward-Looking Business Plan, Best Management/Business Practices, or Strategic Challenges (in the recent past or in the near future based on where their LINKS firm is “now” {at the end of the LINKS exercise, assuming that the LINKS exercise was continuing on for the indefinite future})