



Which Day and What Time?

LINKS Simulations staff routinely execute instructors' scheduled game runs at 900am, 100pm, 500pm, and 900pm U.S. Eastern Time every day of the week. How do LINKS instructors select game run days and times for their LINKS events?

In this Professor's Column, experienced LINKS instructors comment on their game run day and time selection rationale/considerations.

Thursdays @ 900am U.S. Eastern Time

Marketing Management 4020 is case oriented and designed to hone students' critical thinking skills. This undergraduate required class is scheduled from 1225pm-145pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Forty to fifty students enroll each semester and are divided into two LINKS industries. The ideal management team size for each firm is five students, but teams of three and four have been effective. Written case analyses, discussions, focused lectures, readings, and the LINKS Marketing Principles Simulation are the primary educational tools.

Students write a two page case analysis, excluding exhibits, as a "ticket" to participate in the Tuesday case discussions. Text chapters, as well as articles, are the basis for discussion on Thursdays. For example, if the focus of the Tuesday case is pricing, the Thursday readings would provide students with the opportunity to explore pricing in-depth. Following the discussion, a Ph.D. student reviews the results of the most recent LINKS run with the class and identifies firms that may need special coaching. The last 30-40 minutes of the Thursday class are used by LINKS teams to begin the analysis of the most recent results and to ask questions. Having a Ph.D. student involved with both analysis and coaching provides a quality educational experience for the students because two people have more time to interact with each of the teams.

Since the written analyses are due on Tuesdays, the students have voted to have the simulation inputs due at 1059pm. on Wednesdays. LINKS is run at 900am U.S. Eastern Time on Thursdays. Because the David Eccles School of Business is located in Salt Lake City and is on U.S. Mountain Time, LINKS results are generally available at 700am on Thursday morning, which provides 2-3 hours to analyze the LINKS results before the class meets.



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In conclusion, written case analyses are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, LINKS inputs are due Wednesday evenings at 1059pm., LINKS results are analyzed before class on Thursdays, and graded papers are returned at the end of class on Thursday.

Wednesdays @ 100pm U.S. Eastern Time

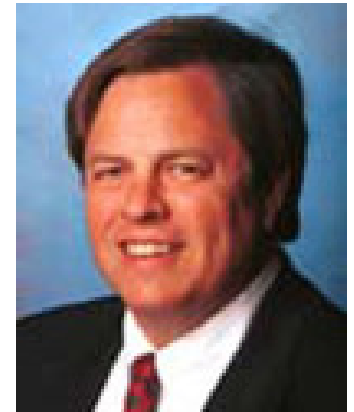
My part-time MBA class of 38 meets on Tuesday nights. We use the LINKS Marketing Principles Simulation as a key component of this marketing management core course. Due to the large class size, I have two industries comprised mostly of teams of three.

On “decision nights,” I give students about an hour of class time to finalize their decisions for the quarter. (Of course, they have spent a great deal more time working on their analyses before class). In addition to inputting decisions on the LINKS website, each team must turn in hard copies of their decisions to me before they leave for the evening.

Since the class meets on Tuesday evening, I have the LINKS runs scheduled for Wednesday at 100pm. I have found this timing works best for these reasons:

1. I can scan the decisions on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning to make sure there are no glaring input errors. When I find something that looks like a typo or too outside the range of normal inputs, I contact someone on the team on Wednesday morning to give them a chance to correct the error.
2. Since the decision was just revisited and discussed in class on Tuesday evening, it should be fresh in everyone’s minds. When team members receive the output on Wednesday afternoon, they can more easily link results with decisions, a key factor in learning how to make better decisions.
3. Having the results available so quickly after the Tuesday evening class also seems to increase student excitement.
4. Finally, having the game run the day after class means that students have the maximum amount of time available to analyze the results and research reports, to contact me to discuss strategies or ask questions, and to prepare their next decisions.

I’ve been using LINKS (and BRANDS before LINKS was available) for about 17 years now, and I have experimented with different timing options. This one seems to work the best for this particular class.



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Mondays and Wednesdays @ 500pm U.S. Eastern Time

I employed the LINKS Supply Chain Management simulation in the Logistics Decision Making class at Ohio State during Spring 2013. This course is a seven-week (half semester) course offered to our MBA and Master of Business Logistics Engineering (MBLE) students.

The class met twice each week (Monday/Wednesdays). A single class session was dedicated to the game introduction. Soon thereafter each team submitted a short strategy statement. The class played seven rounds.

Decision rounds were due at 500pm on successive Mondays and Wednesdays. I found it helpful to meet with the students on the day in which decisions were due. This provided me an opportunity to remind students of the decision round and to address any clarification questions. The class met in the late morning, and I believe it became common practice for teams to key in decisions following the class, as they found that to be a convenient time to gather as a team and complete the exercise.



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Thursdays @ 900pm U.S. Eastern Time

Fundamentals of Supply Chain Management at the Wisconsin School of Business is an undergraduate course for juniors and seniors. I use the mid-level LINKS Supply Chain Management Simulation, and Randy has worked with me to create options within this version that have made it challenging and manageable for my students.

Enrollment in my course is between 40-50 students, and I run two industries with 5 teams of 4-5 students. My course meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and I schedule the game runs each week on Thursdays at 900pm.

The evening time slot works well, because it provides students with more flexibility to meet and strategize prior to input submissions. Also, providing a week between each submission, at least for the initial 2-3 game runs, has been an effective approach when possible. The LINKS simulations initially can be quite overwhelming, and the weekly schedule is much appreciated by the students because they have more time to develop, analyze, and execute strategy.



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