



MONARCH MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Open Course Network · Micro-Course 18

COURSE PROSPECTUS

Applying the Five Disciplines

A two-week, applied micro-course on the five disciplines of the learning organization — a practical method for seeing the structure beneath a persistent problem, surfacing the mental models that hide it, and integrating systems thinking with shared vision and team learning to design a leveraged intervention, worked on one persistent problem you carry all the way through.

2 wks

Two weekly modules

12

Sections

70%

To pass · unlimited attempts

Monarch Management Institute

UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland · umonarch.ch/MMI

Online Management Education for Working Professionals

At a glance

Duration	2 weeks — two weekly modules of six sections
Study time	≈ 14 directed hours (5–8 per week)
Level	Introductory–intermediate; no prior study of systems theory required · no prerequisites
Assessment	2 auto-graded scenario assessments · 70% to pass · unlimited attempts
Award	Monarch-endorsed Certificate of Knowledge
Format	Fully online, self-directed

What you will gain

By the end of this course you will be able to integrate the five disciplines through systems thinking and lead the adaptive organization, designing and defending a complete, leveraged intervention.

And what it counts toward

You earn the Monarch-endorsed Certificate of Knowledge and 2 MMI-Credits. MMI-Credits carry toward MMI program progression (PD-001).

What this course is

Applying the Five Disciplines is a fully online, self-directed micro-course on how to change a problem that keeps coming back. Most managers react at the level of events — a shipment is late, so a crisis meeting is called, overtime is authorised, an inspection is added — and the firefighting feels like control while it changes almost nothing, because the effort spent putting out fires is effort not spent on the conditions that keep lighting them. Decades of research on the learning organization show that most persistent problems are produced not by the events we react to but by the structure of the system that keeps generating them. This course teaches the discipline behind that finding: how to see the system at three levels, trace the loops and delays that drive it, name the archetype it fits, surface the mental models that hide it, and then build the shared vision, team learning and leverage that turn a diagnosis into a change an organization can make. You choose one persistent problem you are responsible for in the opening section — a metric that slips no matter how hard people push, a conflict that recurs, a fix that never quite holds, or the course's running case if you prefer to focus — and carry it through all twelve sections,

finishing with a complete, defended intervention you could put in front of the people who would have to carry it.

The disciplines you will apply

- Systems thinking — see structure beneath events; trace reinforcing and balancing loops, delays and archetypes
- Mental models — surface and test the tacit assumptions that keep a structure invisible
- Personal mastery — hold a clear vision against an honest current reality through creative tension
- Shared vision — build commitment by enrollment rather than compliance
- Team learning — think together through dialogue, past the defensive routines that block it
- Leverage and leadership — locate the small change that most alters the structure, and lead the adaptive organization

Who this course is for

- Division and function heads facing a problem that keeps returning despite constant effort, who want to change the cause rather than chase the symptom
- Managers and team leaders caught in recurring firefighting who need to see the structure producing it and locate leverage
- Consultants and internal change agents who diagnose organizational problems and must build the capability to act on them
- Reflective managers and BBA, MBA or DBA candidates seeking a rigorous, applied grip on systems thinking and the learning organization — no prior study of systems theory assumed

What you will accomplish

- See a persistent problem as a system, reading behavior at three levels — events, patterns and structure
- Trace the reinforcing and balancing loops and delays that generate it, and name the archetype it fits
- Surface and test the mental models that hide the structure, and hold a clear vision against an honest current reality
- Build a shared vision by enrollment and lead a team into the dialogue that dismantles its defensive routines
- Locate the point of highest leverage, where a small, well-focused change produces a large and lasting improvement
- Design and defend a leveraged intervention that integrates the five disciplines and builds a continuously improving organization

Your fortnight, section by section

Module 1 — Seeing the System

Section	Title
1	Seeing the System Instead of the Events
2	Reinforcing and Balancing Loops, and Delay
3	Recurring Patterns and the Archetypes
4	Mental Models and the Ladder of Inference
5	Personal Mastery and Creative Tension
6	Assembling the Systemic Diagnosis

Module 2 — Building the Learning Organization

Section	Title
1	Shared Vision — From Personal to Collective
2	Team Learning Through Dialogue
3	Finding the Point of Leverage
4	Why Systems Thinking Is the Fifth Discipline
5	Leading the Adaptive Organization
6	Designing and Defending the Whole Intervention

Each section follows the same four steps — Explain, Show, Do, Feedback — worked through a running case

(Elena Marsh's division at Meridian Instruments) and then on the problem you choose.

The running case

Alongside your own problem you follow Meridian Instruments, a fictional mid-sized maker of laboratory and diagnostic instruments whose on-time delivery keeps slipping and whose quality problems keep returning despite constant effort. Elena Marsh, newly appointed to lead the division, refuses to treat the late shipments as unrelated events: she reads the pattern, traces a shifting-the-burden structure in which firefighting relieves each crisis while the capability to fix the process quietly erodes, surfaces the mental model that the factory floor is the enemy, and restores a vision of reliable delivery held against an honest current reality. Across Module 2 she builds a shared vision by enrollment, leads her team out of its defensive routines into dialogue, locates the leverage in the starved fundamental

solution rather than the loud symptom, and leads the change as designer, steward and teacher. As a running caution, Marcus Reed, a vice-president, blames the factory floor and reaches for pressure and quick fixes — and watches the crisis return. Real illustrations — the beer distribution game, the classic systems archetypes, the ladder of inference, the practice of dialogue, and the trim-tab image of leverage — appear only as sourced demonstrations of the ideas.

Assessment and certificate

Each module concludes with one auto-graded scenario assessment: a fifteen-item scenario drawn from a larger bank, presenting unfamiliar problems and situations so it tests judgment rather than recall, with two formative checkpoints inside every section along the way. A score of 70% passes, with unlimited untimed attempts, and a full explanation is shown for every item. On passing both module assessments you earn the Monarch-endorsed Certificate of Knowledge.

Taught with its limits

Systems thinking is powerful, but the course teaches its demands alongside the method — that seeing structure means moving the search for causes away from blaming individuals, which is uncomfortable precisely because it asks something of the person diagnosing; that a symptomatic fix relieves the symptom while deepening dependence, so the relief is what closes the trap; that the highest-leverage change is usually counter-intuitive and far from the loudest pain; and that systems thinking alone changes nothing without the shared vision and team learning to act on it. You leave able to diagnose a system and design an intervention that changes the structure rather than reacting harder to the symptom.

Bring one persistent problem, and learn to change the structure that keeps producing it.

