

The POP-DOC Loop

Meta-Leadership Rhythm

There is a cadence to Meta-Leadership. *POP*: What is happening? *DOC*: What should be done about it? The POP-DOC Loop expands upon Boyd's OODA Loop to provide a navigational guide for leaders and followers to develop accurate and robust situational awareness. There are many distractions in complex problem solving; POP-DOC promotes discipline in thinking and action.

The Continuous Mobius Loop

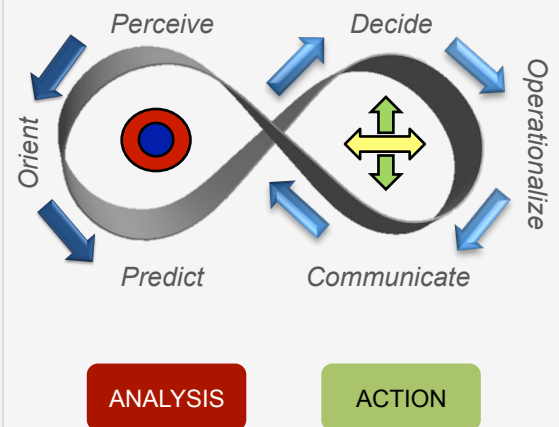
POP-DOC is depicted as a Mobius Loop, a continuous ribbon with a **twist**. That twist represents what is done to intervene into the situation. You start at *Perceive* and once around, you *Perceive* again to assess the outcome of your actions. The **twist** is at *Operationalize*: this is the point where the situation changes. The process requires careful *Perceiving*, *Orienting* to patterns of activity, and then *Predicting* what likely happens next. Decisions derive from what is learned in the POP Loop and are *Operationalized* in the DOC Loop. The result is *Communicated* out to others just as results are *Communicated* in. "Were intended impacts achieved?" "What is working and not?" *Perceiving* the answers, the next loop begins.

POP-DOC Impact

The POP-DOC Loop directs the performance and the outcomes of Meta-Leadership practice. Each side prepares and reinforces the other. One danger is getting caught in the POP Loop: waiting for more information and refusing to make decisions. This is "paralysis by analysis." Another danger is getting caught in the DOC Loop, making impulsive decisions resulting in hasty actions without careful assessment of the situation and what can be done about it. This is "ready, fire, aim."

1. **Perceive:** There is much for the meta-leader to perceive: data, emotions, the politics, and the overarching narrative. A wide and insightful purview is critical or the effort moves blindly.
2. **Orient:** Meaningful patterns are discerned from all that is perceived. This situates what is happening and what needs to be done into its larger context.
3. **Predict:** Patterns accurately perceived are projected toward the future, so that the meta-leader anticipates and acts upon what likely will happen next, a critical meta-leadership skill.
4. **Decide:** From the predictions, a path forward must be chosen. The POP Loop informs and prompts disciplined decision making necessary to catalyze action.
5. **Operationalize:** For decisions to translate into motion, a different part of the brain is activated to calibrate the resources, activities, and support necessary to accomplish the objective.
6. **Communicate:** Decisions and actions must be communicated widely, so stakeholders know what is happening and what they need to do, with feedback loops back to assess impact and outcome.

POP-DOC The Mobius Loop — Navigating Complex Situations



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