

Loops on loops

One of this weeks readings was around the topic of double loop reflection and the impacts of this in on organizations. This has been coincidentally relevant to our team over the past week. To understand double loop reflection it is helpful to understand single loop reflection first. Single loop reflections refer to a more basic level of reflection. Once an outcome is realized, an organization can reflect back upon the strategies and techniques used to achieve this goal. This is a technique that we as a team and individuals have been using throughout the semester. It has been relatively successful and we have been achieving goals set by the team. However after reading about the double loop reflection we have come to the realization that limiting our reflection to a single loop may impede on the future of our business. Double loop involved reflection back beyond the strategies and techniques and drilling into the underlying assumptions and long term goals of an organization. This was something that our team was able to do over the break. Prior to the break, our goal was to be the best in our country, this was achieved. Our assumption was that being in this position would be sufficient and we would be successful if we achieved this. To reach this we set a range of smaller goals and objectives and competed fiercely with other firms in our market. After some deep double loop reflection by our team over the break we came to the realization that if we kept performing under our current assumptions and long term goals we would be limiting our business. As a result we need to rebuild our understanding and long term goals. An example of this is the being the best in our market is not enough. Instead we should have been aiming "to be the very best, like no one ever was". Making this our new goal would involve us reflecting on some of our underlying assumptions. One of our underlying assumptions was that the competitors we face in our market are bad/evil/not our friends/don't talk to them. This may limiting assumption to have. For us to be "the very best, like no one ever was" we need our market to be strong just as much as we need our own company to be strong. This may result in us working alongside our competitors instead of competing directly against them. The will result in growing the market as a whole and allowing firms in our market grow.

Reflection on this idea I have come to the conclusion that both single and double loop reflection are essential processes for business and personal success. In saying this I feel it is a lot easier to for someone to reflect on techniques and short efforts compared to reflection on underlying assumptions. I imagine that to many people questioning underlying assumptions can be daunting. As a result I imagine double loop will be performed less than it should be.

Synnott, M. (2013). Reflection and double loop learning: The case of HS2. *Teaching Public Administration*, 31(1), 124--134.[doi:10.1177/0144739413479950](https://doi.org/10.1177/0144739413479950)