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[Data as A Mirror Learning Series: Entry 4](#)  
Dr. Morgan Goering and Erin Potter

# DATA AS A MIRROR

## A Double-Loop Conversation Framework for Leaders

Leader Preparation Prompts (Use Before Entering the Room)

- What is this team responsible for improving? (Bryk et al., 2015)
- How has data historically been experienced here?
- What emotional response might be rational?
- What signals will I send about curiosity vs. judgment?



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### What We See (Single Loop)

Sensemaking is social. Meaning must precede movement. (Weick, 1995)

#### Student Patterns

- What are we noticing, without explaining yet?
- Where are trends emerging?
- What feels surprising?
- What data are we not seeing?

#### Shared Interpretation

- What might this pattern mean?
- Where is our interpretation incomplete?
- Whose voice is missing in this meaning-making?
- What assumptions may be shaping how we're reading this?

#### Next Moves

- What small step might we test?
- What decision belongs to this team?
- What do we need to learn before acting?
- What will we revisit to see the impact?

### What the Mirror Shows About Us (Double Loop)

Double-loop learning examines the thinking and routines behind action. (Argyris & Schön, 1978)

#### Adult Practice

- What are we doing that may be influencing this pattern?
- Where are we consistent? Where not so?
- How are we modeling curiosity or defensiveness?
- Are we distributing meaning-making or centralizing it?

#### Assumptions & Beliefs

- What beliefs about students, time, or capacity are operating here?
- What are we protecting?
- Where might fear be shaping participation?
- What mental models need examination?

#### System Conditions

- What structures (time, clarity, authority) are shaping what's possible?
- Is decision authority clear in this room?
- Do routines protect inquiry, or rush closure?
- What condition must be strengthened before improvement is sustainable?

If we only adjust strategies, we are working in a single loop. **If we examine assumptions and conditions, we are holding the mirror.**

- Data becomes a mirror when inquiry replaces defense, adult practice is examined alongside student outcomes, and psychological safety makes uncertainty visible
- Meaning is constructed together, and knowledge grows in a continued conversation.