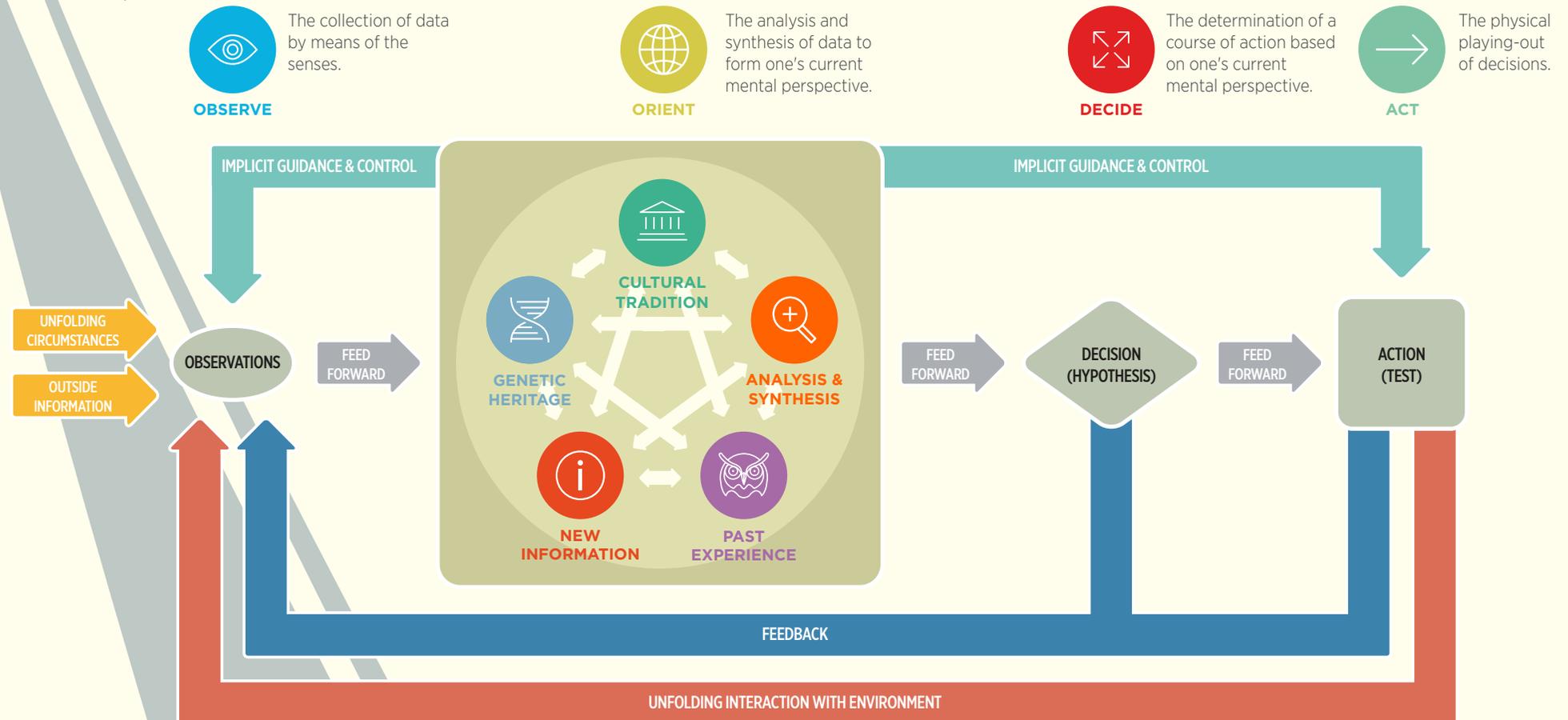


Boyd's OODA Loop

The most powerful unifying model for strategic thinking

For John Boyd, the key to survival and autonomy is the ability to adapt to change, not perfect adaptation to existing circumstances. Boyd concluded that to maintain an accurate or effective grasp of reality one must undergo a continuous cycle of interaction with the environment geared to assessing its constant changes. He termed the process by which an entity (either an individual or an organisation) reacts to an event (change) a "decision cycle". Boyd broke this cycle down to four interrelated and overlapping processes through which one cycles continuously – the OODA loop.



Boyd asserted that this decision cycle was the central mechanism of adaptation (in a social context) and that increasing one's own rate and accuracy of assessment relative to a counterpart's rate and accuracy of assessment is the primary source of advantage in war or other forms of competition (for resources). On the surface, Boyd's OODA loop looks simple, and it is tempting to give in to the human tendency to seek formulae and so reduce strategic thinking to a simple algorithm – as many have done. The reality couldn't be further from the truth. Boyd intended the OODA "loop" to be a guide to action, not a formula. **The OODA loop should not be considered as a sequential process.**