

MOT – Multiple Organisational Tool

Design

The design is deliberately 'low tech' in the sense that it requires no electronics and uses a single sheet of paper (A4), with no prior photocopying/printing. It is also 'compact' in the sense that evidence of a whole thinking process is contained on the one piece of paper. (A prepared version is available for printing/photocopying for those who might prefer it.)

Multipurpose

The 'thinking process' on which the tool is based (Record - Brainstorm - Distil - Plan) can be applied to many situations:

- lesson/project planning;
- individual pupil plans;
- whole school evaluation;
- performance evaluation and planning.

Like any tool, its effectiveness will depend upon the skill and experience of the those who wield it. And, like anything that is worthwhile, it may take a little practice. Having a 'perfectly' completed MOT is just like receiving your car MOT - absolutely useless...unless it followed by action.

Anatomy of the MOT

	Essential Question/Focus		
Notes/Observations	Positives (to build on)	Problems (to solve)	Potentials (to explore)

- i. **Notes/Observations:** This is where you record raw data *without placing any value judgements* upon it. It could contain:

- *what you saw and heard during the observation of an individual/a group/class/practitioner/ etc.;*
- *questions or sections of a test/exam paper;*
- *success criteria for a specific product or process;*
- *points in a school development plan.*

On a sheet of folded or sectioned A4 paper, the Notes/Observation section should be approximately the width of a standard square Post-it. A 'stack' of Post-it notes could be placed here. (See later section 'Using Post-its')

If the data to be considered is too lengthy to place/cut and paste here, the document could simply be referenced.

ii. Essential Question/Focus: How you use the data which you have collected in the Notes/Observation will depend upon this 'question'. The questions could range from relatively simple analytical questions to higher order thinking questions.

- *How can I improve essay writing in Class X?*
- *How can group Z develop collaborative working skills/dispositions?*
- *What can we do as a cluster/family/community of schools to ensure 'transition' between key stages/schools is an effective and enjoyable experience for all involved?*
- *How can we maximise the effectiveness of Learning Support Assistants?*
- *How well are we promoting positive behaviour during lunchtimes?*

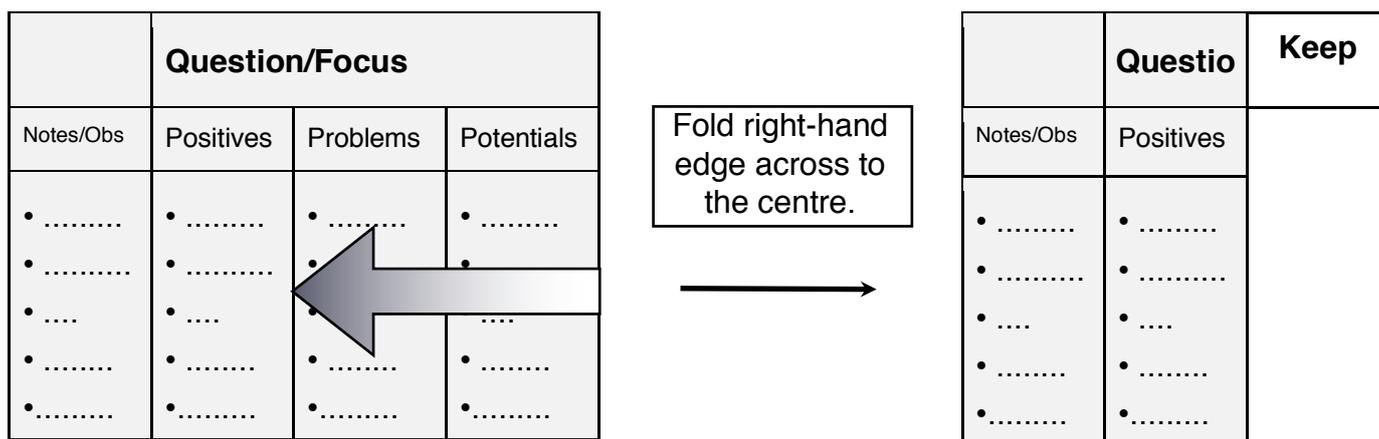
iii. Brainstorming Positives, Problems and Potentials: With the Essential Question/Focus in mind, it is now time to respond to the data. This is a 'brainstorming' session, so 'brainstorming' rules apply - quantity not quality, no put-downs, have fun! Set a reasonable time limit for the brainstorm (e.g., 2 minutes for each column) and record responses in the appropriate column. Focus on each column **in turn** and don't be tempted to skip ahead. Any additional thoughts can be added to previous columns after the designated time has finished. Remember:

- **Positives** - *with reference to the data/question, what is already being done that can be built upon?* It is vitally important to recognise, affirm and value current achievements.
- **Problems** - *what are the issues that need to be addressed?* Brainstorming can often introduce seemingly unimportant factors which have not been recognised previously as having a negative impact. These could take the form of questions.
- **Potentials** - *what possible solutions can we explore, what connections can we make that could be interesting or have a possible potential impact?* This is not always about solutions to problems. It could be about introducing something new or creating synergy.

Once the reactions to three 'brainstorming' columns (Positives, Problems and Potentials) have been recorded, this side of the MOT has been completed. If, however, separate MOTs have been completed by individuals, you may want to have a 'sharing session'. This could be in pairs or small groups. There is no set format for 'sharing' although 'turn-taking' rules could apply. It could be organised in any of the following ways:

- Individuals share their whole MOT responses in turn.
- The group takes turns to share Positives first, then Problems, then Potentials.
- During sharing, it is legitimate for participants to note other people's responses on their own MOT. This is not 'copying'! It is recognising, acknowledging and valuing other people's thoughts.
- Following sharing, there could be a discussion time for clarification. What some people have considered a 'problem' may have been recorded as a 'positive' by someone else.
- Responses could be synthesised/collated by a recorder on a separate small-group MOT.

iv. Filter/Distil (Keep and Change): The 'brainstorming' section is about 'quantity not quality'. This section is the reverse. It is about prioritising ideas for action - and you get to do a bit of basic Origami (Japanese paper-folding to the uninitiated!).



- Fold the right-hand side across to the as shown in the above diagram.
- **Keep** - You may have a long list of things in your Positives column - great! Of course, you will want to keep doing them all and that may be possible. However, it may be difficult to actually 'focus' on maintaining them all - a bit like trying to focus on everything when you are learning to drive. Considering your essential question, you need to prioritise one or two things to focus on maintaining while you address problems/explore potential. Note your priorities in the 'Keep' column.
- Open the MOT out again, then fold the left-hand side to the centre as shown in the diagram on following page.

	Questio	Keep
Notes/Obs	Positives	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

1. Open out MOT

	Question/Focus		
Notes/Obs	Positives	Problems	Potentials
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•

2. Fold left-hand edge across to the centre.

Change	s/Focus	
	Problems	Potentials
	•	•
	•	•
	•	•
	•	•
	•	•

- **Change** - You need to consider the lists in the Problems and Potentials columns. You need to consider the question/focus. You will need to prioritise. *What changes will I need to make to make an impact? Which are the most important problems to solve or which potentials do I need to explore?* Write two or three things down. Your ideas may come from both columns or just one but restrict it to a manageable number, i.e. if you choose from both, the combined total should still be no more than three.
- Open out the MOT again. Then turn over the MOT so the reverse side is visible.

Change	s/Focus	
	Problems	Potentials
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

1. Open out MOT

	Question/Focus		
Notes/Obs	Positives	Problems	Potentials
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•

2. Now turn over MOT



- You should now see three columns labelled 'Keep', 'Next Steps (Grow)' and Change.

Keep	Next Steps (Grow)	Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

v. Plan: In this final section, you will need to synthesise your Keep and Change priorities into a manageable action plan, detailing how you will 'Grow' i.e. what your 'Next Steps' will be. After all a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step! It is important to note, however, that this section is not merely copying what you have done into the centre column. This is 'putting flesh on the bone'. This is where you begin to detail *how* you will maintain the 'keeps' and also what you will have to do to realise the 'changes'.

For example, if you wish to solve a particular problem, what are the 'specific' steps you think you would need to take and when. This could be...arrange a meeting, delegate tasks/roles, gather resources. This is about detailing your process...times, names, places, resources. You can always refine at a later date.

A catalyst for dialogue between learners

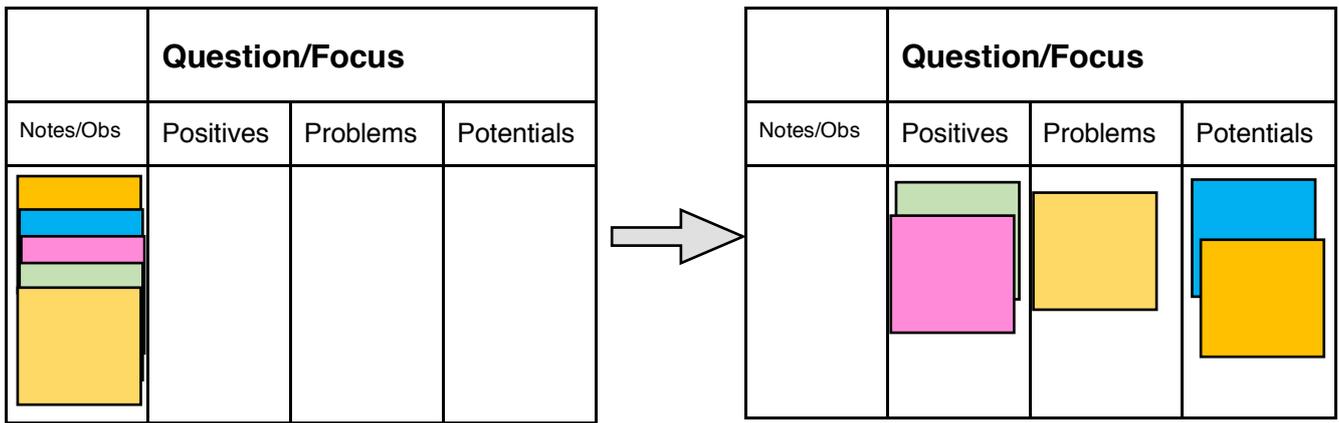
The MOT is a formative assessment tool. From evidence (Notes/Observations) it assesses the current position (Positives and Problems). It explores possible solutions/connections (Potentials) and prioritises needs and plans a way forward (Keep-Change-Grow).

The Notes/Observations may be written or suggested by peers, self, or an external observer (a teacher, learning support assistant etc.). It is vital that those being observed should fill in their own MOT or at least, be asked 'What do you think were the positives/problems/potentials?'. The answers to these questions may vary considerably from that of the observer. This is where dialogue begins...as a process of discovering what was really learned during the task. It may also reveal widely differing perspectives about the value of certain actions and behaviours.

*It cannot be overemphasised that this is a tool for finding an **agreed** way forward. It is NOT a proforma which is completed by an observer and then handed to the learner as an action plan without discussion. That is not formative assessment or personalised learning.*

Using Post-its

Specific observation may be written on individual post-its. A stack of post-its may be placed in the Notes/Observation column and physically 'sorted' into Positives/Problems/Potentials by the learners, either alone or in discussion with an observer.



Timing

The length of time required to complete the MOT will vary according to context. You can see from the example below that if time was limited, an individual MOT (or a single sheet completed by a group) could reasonably take just 15 minutes!

Notes/Observations: 3 minutes

Brainstorm

- Positives: 2 minutes, then...
- Problems: 2 minutes, then...
- Potential: 2 minutes.

Distil

- Keep: 2 minutes
- Change: 2 minutes

Next Steps (Grow): 2 minutes

However, the MOT could be used to facilitate lengthier discussions and decision-making in staff meetings or collegiate/CPD sessions.

The 'notes/observations' may be derived from various sources. This could range from some basic bullet points or a transcript of a lesson observation. It could also be a single word referencing a book or document.

Individuals could complete their individual MOT brainstorm then share the contents with others. This could lead to a discussion and the production of a single MOT representing the collective thoughts of the group. The same could be applied to the distillation (Keep/Change) process.

The Next Steps (Grow) section may need time to add a level of detail – roles, responsibilities, actions, deadlines etc. It is important that these are clearly understood by all involved because they are essentially 'success criteria', so they need to be specific actions rather than vague suggestions.