

Lesson 4: The MAST Experience

Part A

This lesson teaches you the characteristics that a facilitator should have. You also learn how a MAST project gets started.

The key to MAST is flexibility based on theories. In this lesson you discover several ways that the MAST strategy can be adapted to varied circumstances.

Facilitator Qualifications

In order to be a facilitator in a MAST project, certain qualifications are desirable. These are listed below and will be explained further:

- Humility
- Team player
- Ability to follow a plan
- Flexibility
- English ability
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Other beneficial qualifications:
 - Exegetical skills
 - Biblical language skills
 - Computer skills
 - National language skills

Displaying Humility

All of us should be humble in God's service, realizing that our power comes from Him:

- 1 Peter 4:11b: *If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*
- Romans 11:36: *For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*
- Jesus said: *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)*

However, sometimes it is tempting to compare ourselves with others and think that we are better than someone else. Scripture tells us otherwise:

- Romans 12:3-6: ³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.
- Philippians 2:3-4: ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Jesus Modeled Humility

Jesus modeled humility in His earthly life in many ways. One example was when He washed the disciples' feet, as described in John 15:

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.

¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.

¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Humility in Accordance with Theories

When working with others, it is helpful to remember the theories relating to personality types and multiple intelligences.

No one form of intelligence or personality type or preferred mode of thinking is better than any other. They all complement one another. Everyone has something to bring to the table!

Being a Team Player

Closely related to the quality of humility is the ability to be a team player. When we value other team members, we are likely to care about what the team is doing and contribute to its success. Team players do the following:

- Treat others with respect – listen to their input and show that their opinions are valued
- Are reliable – do what they say they'll do

- Communicate constructively – express thoughts directly and respectfully
- Participate – are prepared for meetings and fully engaged in team projects, willing to do what it takes to achieve team success
- Share information – ensure that all team members are informed; share knowledge willingly
- Cooperate – help wherever needed and comply with team decisions even when not in full agreement
- Are flexible – adapt to changes
- Are problem solvers – don't dwell on problems or placing blame, but work toward solutions.

Following a Plan

When you begin working in a MAST project, you will be following a plan that is designed to ensure the success of the translation project. This plan utilizes the MAST method that is based on theories and broken down into specific steps. Following the plan provides structure to the project to achieve maximum impact.

Although the MAST process may be unfamiliar to you, and you may not be comfortable working this way, it is essential that you follow the steps as closely as possible. Peter was uncomfortable with following Jesus' direction to walk on the water, with predictable results as described in Matthew 14:

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Being Flexible

One of the advantages of the MAST methodology is that it is person-centered, not process-centered. This means that the process is adaptable to the individuals who comprise the translation team. This may require the team leader to adjust the plan while in the midst of a translation project.

Because of this it is essential for facilitators to be able to take direction from the team leader when it is necessary to depart from the stated plan.

Speaking English

The requirement that facilitators speak English is for those from Wycliffe Associates, not for natives of the country where the translation project is taking place.

Speaking English enables all MAST facilitators to communicate in a common language.

Displaying Cultural Sensitivity

As a facilitator, you must be aware that there may be vast cultural differences between you and the native translators. Knowing what these differences are can keep you from inadvertently being disrespectful to the translators, who are much more likely to be cooperative when you show that you are aware of and respectful of their culture.

You must avoid making value judgements about their customs and norms that are different from yours: different does not mean inferior! Each culture is unique and contributes to a diverse and interesting world. When you show the translators that you appreciate their culture, they feel respected and valued.

It is a good idea, then, to make an effort to find out about the culture of the project location before you go.

Having Optional Qualifications

The qualifications discussed previously are absolutely necessary for a facilitator. Additionally there are other skills that, while not mandatory, will help you in facilitating a translation project. These include:

- **Computer skills:** The ability to use a computer and to assist others with computer issues can be very helpful, especially when the translators are using computers to perform the translation.
- **Exegetical skills:** The ability to critically explain or interpret scripture can help others to understand its meaning and enhance the accuracy of the translation.
- **Biblical language skills:** Greek or Hebrew skills are very helpful, especially when defining key words.
- **National language skills:** Knowing the native language that the translators speak will lessen the need for an interpreter and will enable you to enhance communication among team members and other facilitators.

What Does a Facilitator Do?

A MAST facilitator can perform many functions at the direction of the team leader. These functions typically include:

- Leading worship, praying for the group, and/or giving a devotional.
- Ensuring that translators properly follow the steps of consuming text, verbalizing, chunking, blind drafting, self-checking, and peer checking.
- Assist translators in identifying and translating important terms.
- Participate in verse-by-verse checking.
- Encouraging translators through honest feedback and praise.

While these are typical duties, keep in mind that each translation project is different, so you should be ready for whatever the team leader asks of you to make the event effective.

Please proceed to Part B of Lesson 4.