

Lesson 3: Applying Theories in MAST Steps

Part A

In this lesson you learn how the theories that were introduced in the last lesson influence each step of the MAST process. Once you understand how the steps are grounded in theory, you can effectively utilize the MAST methodology in a translation project.

Beginning with Assessment

Before starting translation activities, the facilitator should set up the individual translators for success by assessing their skills and personalities and then grouping them into teams based on the assessment. This enables the facilitator to delegate tasks to each team that the individuals are capable of performing. According to the least restrictive environment theory, this removes barriers to success that would exist if team members were assigned tasks for which they did not feel adequate.

For scripture translation tasks, students should be assessed for language fluencies, thinking skill levels and personalities, familiarity with the Bible, and ability to use a computer, if applicable. It is also helpful to determine left or right brain preferences, as well as utilizing shapes personality theory to identify basic personality types. For example, you would not want to have a team composed only of squiggles and circles – they wouldn't get anything done!

Participants can then be divided into teams based on the results of this assessment. Groups with lower skill levels can be assigned less challenging scripture portions than the higher groups.

Beginning with assessment helps to remove as many barriers as possible and sets individual plans based on the assessment. Assessment gives the facilitator insight to each participant so that the MAST process can be adapted to the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals who are involved.

Worship/Prayer/Focus

During worship, prayer, and focus time, the emphasis should be on readying and motivating the translators in their work.

Worship and prayer remind them that they are serving God through this work and accomplishing His purposes, while drawing on His strength to accomplish the task. In Acts 2, the Christians were able to speak in different languages as the Holy Spirit enabled them, in order to bear witness to the glory of God. Knowing that they can utilize the power of the Holy Spirit gives translators confidence that they are able to perform this work.

Focus time is a time for encouraging the translators and giving them praise and feedback on what has been accomplished so far. This should reduce any stress they may be feeling, accelerate their work, and enhance a sense of ownership.

As a facilitator, you want to be there in encouragement to talk with translators, move them along, encourage fast paced work, and so on.

In accordance with time principles of brain-based education, this early morning time (around 2 hours after waking) is ideal for new learning, so you may provide a short period of instruction. This enables them to “warm up” their thinking brain. Performance is enhanced by doing this before jumping into translation activities, to ensure that the brain is at its highest functioning level.

However, it is important to remember not to overload their brains with too much learning before the actual work takes place.

In accordance with the least restrictive environment theory, you should remove the barrier of too much learning before doing, because they will learn best by doing.

Think of the last time you asked someone for directions to a distant location. By the time they were through telling you of all the turns and street names, you could be thoroughly confused. Contrast that with the turn-by-turn directions that you get from a GPS. It gives you the information you need right when you need it.

Similarly, if you give too much instruction at the beginning of the day, it will not be retained as well as if you coach the translators as they are performing the task.

Consuming Text

The goal of reading the text is a basic understanding of the scripture to be translated. As a facilitator, you should let the readers decide which method best fits their personalities. In oral language groups, sometimes you will have readers or audio recordings. In other groups, each person may want to read the scripture portion silently to best interact with the text personally (Sustained-Silent Reading Principles).

Some teams may prefer to use a group discussion of the text (Literature Circles Theory) so that translators express understanding of what they read. This should be as short and quick as possible: usually not over ten minutes of discussion after a reading session.

To learn more about how to apply theories to MAST steps, please proceed to Part B of Lesson 3.

