

Balancing Your Competing Lives: A Guide to Phase 6 and Phase un-6, for People in “Life after Full-Time Language Learning”

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Introduction.....	2
This guide in a nutshell.....	3
Definition of terms: “Home” vs. “host”; “local” vs. “newcomer/immigrant”.....	3
The Growing Participator Approach (GPA).....	5
“ <i>They stories</i> ”.....	6
Growing is participating and participating is growing.	6
Supercharged participation.....	7
Where are we in Phase 6 and Phase un-6?.....	8
Phase 6, Phase un-6 and “language proficiency levels”.....	8
How far does the person in Phase 6 have to go before they are “done”?.....	9
What happens to those who quit supercharged participation in earlier phases?.....	11
You quit after Phase 1 or 2 and depend on everyday interaction alone:.....	12
You quit after Phase 3 or 4 and depend on everyday interaction alone:.....	12
How I Got into Phase 6 and un-6 in the Russian and Kazakh worlds, respectively.....	13
How about 100 or 300 hours to a <i>new you</i> in Phase un-6?.....	14
Choosing supercharged activities for Phase un-6.....	15
Higher-level supercharged participation.....	16
A few detailed supercharged activities.....	17
Needs analysis.....	18
I probably let some readers down.....	20
Hole finding.....	20
Private activities that are supercharged once you have laid the social foundation:.....	21
Mass electronic media and reading.....	21
Participation through mass media?.....	21
The great value of reading in Phase 6 (in languacultures where relevant).....	23
Getting practical (at last): It’s not a language to be learned but a life to be lived.....	23
A concrete, though hypothetical example.....	24
The dominance of our home life in our host country.....	25
A new lifestyle to give our host life more of a fighting chance: 100 waking hours.....	27
Finding more time for host people (in their world, that is, not in my world).....	27
The full Revolution: Growing participation is not about individuals!.....	28
Making my workplace into a host community of practice.....	28
Our place of residence getting some host-life time.....	29
Social life in general.....	31
Take a course.....	31
International schools as another lost opportunity we can redeem.....	31
Team life.....	32
How about a broader, growing-participating community of expat sojourners?.....	33
Miscellaneous special issues, relevant to some groups of readers only.....	33
The Anglophone host world of non-Anglophone expats abroad.....	33

The national languaculture as another competing host life	34
Getting enough host-life time with displaced host groups.....	34
But they feel insulted if I don't use English!	35
Conclusion: <i>Not a language to be learned but a life to be lived</i>	36
References.....	36

“It's not a language to be learned, but a life to be lived.”

Introduction

As I began writing this, I was in a small café in Nepal while a happy, free-flowing two-person conversation was going on in the booth next to me. A third man came in and sat down and later a fourth, and with each new participant who joined it, the conversation rolled on, apparently quite smoothly incorporating each new party, because each party belonged.

This small conversation was part of the bigger, society-wide “conversation” of Nepali life. I was shut out. If they had been Russians, I wouldn't have felt shut out at all. If Kazakhs, I still might have felt shut out to quite an extent. That is the difference between being in Phase 6 (my Russian) and Phase un-6 (my Kazakh).

People keep asking for a guide to Phase 6 (the phase we call “Self-Sustaining Growth”) to bring closure to the Phase 1 through 5 Guides. Hence the present document. I decided to write it as a broader guide for all who see themselves as “beyond full-time language learning.” I do this for three reasons. First, not everyone who completes Phase 1 through 5 will be truly in Phase 6, but they may want guidance regarding how to keep growing. Second, we've always said that those in Phase 6 may chose to continue doing some supercharged participation activities, and so our discussion of those activities in this guide is relevant both to people in Phase 6 and people in Phase un-6 (defined below). Third, for those who are in Phase 6, as well as for those who see themselves as “beyond full-time language learning,” lifestyle issues are crucial.

Simple Definition of Phase 6:

- 1) You have the ability to understand most of what you hear host people say (and see them do) around you. In addition...
- 2) You do, in fact, keep hearing host people saying a lot around you (and see them doing a lot).

This results in constant growth because day by day you become increasingly familiar with how host people talk and otherwise live. If the only reason you are not in Phase 6 is that condition 2 doesn't hold anymore, that is relatively fixable. If you are not in Phase 6 because condition 1 doesn't hold, then you have a much bigger challenge before you if you want to grow much.

Definition of Phase un-6:

- 1) You are not in Phase 6, either because part 1 or part 2 of the Phase 6 definition doesn't hold.
- 2) You are devoting little or no time to concentrated “language learning activities” (supercharged participation activities) and hence you aren't in Phases 1 through 5 either.

In Phase un-6, you may or may not regularly hear host people talking, but if you do, much of what they say (and otherwise do) is still “noise” to you. You are not likely to grow a lot without many more hours of special effort.

This guide is written from the perspective of people who “go overseas” to live and work. Many of the issues are just as applicable to those who come to immigrant-receiving countries to live permanently. We will not attempt to make such applications, though. That is up to the reader.

This guide in a nutshell

If you are in Phase 6, and want to keep growing, you need do nothing. However, lifestyle issues can take you right out of Phase 6, and so we discuss these at length below. In addition to keeping a Phase 6 lifestyle, you might choose to do supercharged participation activities for perhaps five hours a week in order to accelerate your growth. It’s a long road, after all.

If you are in Phase un-6, you need to address the same lifestyle issues, but in addition, you almost certainly need to be spending many hours per week in supercharged participation activities, if you are to have a hope of growing much.

Therefore, we’ll have much to say about 1) dealing with lifestyle issues: giving your host life a reasonable share of your time. On the other hand, we’ll have less to say about 2) supercharged participation activities, since you already have the guides to Phases 1 through 5 for those. However, we’ll give some examples of activities a person in Phase 6 might use for specific needs. These may also be relevant to someone in Phase un-6.

Let the buyer beware: In this guide, I’m not going to pull punches. No one’s toes will be stepped on more than those of the author. *It’s not about a language to be learned, but a life to be lived.* Am I going to live the life? No life—no growth. Now, some readers may not need any of my scolding, as they have successfully dodged the many threats to a healthy host life that we discuss below (and others). Indeed, some readers may live in intensely face-to-face village environments, where there is little concept of personal privacy, and where their days are filled with host people involving them in host life whenever they are awake, whether they want the involvement or not. If you find that none of what I have to say about the lives we live makes you feel guilty, then why not just pass this on to a friend! It may not change hands too many times before it touches a sensitive nerve in somebody! However, I’m also thinking of a couple of people who were given sadly limited opportunities to be growing participators, and yet who have fared nobly as growing participators under the circumstances. My hat goes off to them. They are excused from feeling guilty over their limited growth.

Definition of terms: “Home” vs. “host”; “local” vs. “newcomer/immigrant”

“Home” and “host” are technical terms in the GPA. They do not mean the same as “newcomer/immigrant” vs. “local.” “Home” and “host” are modifiers of other nouns, such as “world.” My “home world” is my native North American world (I’m a mix of Canadian and American). I take it with me wherever I go. When I started writing this I was in Nepal, and the entire six weeks that I was there, I lived in my home world. I didn’t have rich encounters with Nepalis unless the encounters were on my terms, using my language (i.e., in my home world). I also interacted with Germans, Chinese, and members of other nationalities who related to me on my terms, using my language, while in Nepal. They, too, were part of my home world, which was at the same time their host world (whether or not the world of some Nepali people group was also a host world to them). In Nepal, I was a host person, even to Nepalis, so long as our dealings were on my terms, in my language.

At one time, my wife and two sons and I were in our home country, Canada, and we met with Russians who were nurturing us into their Russian world. When we were with them, even

though we were “local people” in our home country and they were “newcomers/immigrants,” we were functioning, however weakly, in their world. They were the host people to us at those times, nurturing us into their home world.

More commonly in Canada, the *local people* are the host people to the *newcomers/immigrants*, who are the growing participators.

What makes my world-of-this-moment “home” or “host” does not depend on where I am geographically, but rather depends on whether I am serving as “host person” (which means I am living in *my* home world), or whether I am serving as *growing participator* (relating to the other person/persons on their terms, in their languacultural world, using their language).

To see if you understand the distinction between “home” and “host,” answer the following multiple choice question:

Someone who devoted many hours this past week to his or her *home life* was, during those hours, physically...

- a. at home with other family members (or home alone, if single).
- b. out with “the boys” (“girls”) having a good time around town
- c. either a or b
- d. neither a or b
- e. c or d

If you answered “a,” then you understood “home life” in the everyday sense of the phrase, which is *not what we mean*. The correct answer is “e.” If you can understand why this is so, you are free to read the rest of this guide. If not, figure it out! Well, there is a concrete illustration below that may solve this puzzle for you.

This usage of the words “home” and “host” originated in our study of language and identity (Thomson, 2007) where we speak of our “home identity” (who we are in the experience of other members of our home world, even in our country abroad) and our “host identity” (who we are in the experience of the local people). In my home identity, I may be a “language-learning” hero, or a “language-learning failure” or something else. In my host identity, I’m a cute-acting guy, who thinks he is more host-like than he is! In this guide, we will talk a lot about our *home life* and our *host life*. We can use these modifiers in combination with many other nouns. We might speak of our *home friends* and our *host friends*; or our *home language* and our *host language*—or more properly, our *home languacultural world* vs. our *host languacultural world*. (“Languacultural world” is, of course, one of the foundational concepts of the Growing Participator Approach; see the Phase 3 and Phase 4 Guides for explanations.) We can speak of *home activities* vs. *host activities*; *home discourses* vs. *host discourses*, *home music* vs. *host music*, *home clothing* vs. *host clothing* etc.)

A concrete illustration: Let’s assume you are native Australian and you are a growing participator in Japan (that means that you are not Japanese, but are participating in Japanese life on Japanese terms, using the Japanese language).

If any of the following people are with you in in Japan, when are they living with you in your Australian home world? When are they living with you in your local Japanese host world?*

	This person is living with me in my home world when...	This person is living with me in my host world when...
A fellow Australian		
A Japanese person		
A Korean		
A German		
An American		

The case of the American is a little tricky. However, in comparison with the local people, the Japanese, we will say that practically speaking, there is an Anglophone languacultural world which is the home world of Americans and Australians. This is a fudge, but it will serve us well (until the Americans and Australians offend each other through their differing practices!).

Multiple lives: If you are the Korean or German in Japan that we mentioned, then you are living three lives: your home life (Korean); host-life-number-1 (your life with Japanese people, using Japanese and trying to follow their practices); and host-life-number-2 (your life with Anglophones using English and trying to follow their practices). By contrast, if you are the Australian, you are living two lives, your home life (with other Anglophones) and your host life (using Japanese and trying to follow Japanese practices).

Principle of Competition Between Lives:

Whether you live one, two, three or more lives in Japan, you only live one life at a time.

For a Korean, time spent in your home life (your Korean life) is time not spent in host-life-number-1 (your Japanese life) or host-life-number-2 (your Anglophone life). Time spent in host-life-number-2 (your Anglophone life) is time not spent in your home life (your Korean life), or host-life-number-1 (your Japanese life). Time spent in host-life-number-1 (your Japanese life), is time not spent in host-life-number-2 (your Anglophone life), nor in your home life (your Korean life). Question: If a Korean is relating to her Korean husband and Korean children, which life is she living? (Answer thoughtfully.)*

Thus your lives compete for your time, and at any moment, one of those lives is the winner, and the other life or lives are the losers.

Note the unique position of your home life among your lives. Even when you are living one of your host-lives, your home life isn't far under the surface. You live your host life with a home-life "accent." We traditionally think of an "accent" as being non-host-sounding pronunciation. In fact, we also have our home "accent" in our hearing of host speech, in our understanding of host words and phrase, and in our whole conceptual system through which we make sense of host life. To be a growing participator means among other things that your mental "language processes" and your conceptual system are doing their best to cope with life in the host world, and in the process, gradually changing to become more host-like, though the accent will never entirely go away. It is part of what makes you special!

The Growing Participator Approach (GPA)

If you are new to the GPA, you need to understand that it is not about "language learning," or "language ability," much as we tend to keep slipping back into talking like it is (for example, in the title and subtitle of this article!). Rather, it is about being nurtured into another languacultural world, and being apprenticed into increasingly host-like participation in that host world, following the practices by which host people live together, while always retaining the

place of a “stranger”: combining closeness and distance in a way that makes you a unique gift to the host life (Smith & Carvill, 2000). Growing participators (GPs), by growing into the host world, join its ongoing, lived story. That lived story consists of a stream of human actions. Language (by which I mean acts of listening with understanding, and of speaking, and of interacting conversationally) is a pervasive, dominating feature of human action, but not separable from the stream of all the ways people mean things to each other and attempt to achieve meaningful goals through all of their actions. Hence in place of “language” we often speak of “languaculture” and of “languacultural worlds.” (Alternatively, we can say that in place of “culture,” we often speak of “languaculture” and of “languacultural worlds.”) This means that learning to call a particular animal a “dog” is growing participation, and so is joining in the group’s discourses about dogs (what is said about them and to them, and the way they are treated, used, etc., and how they interact with human status and roles and values, etc.). Learning the word “dog” is not language learning separate from culture learning, and learning to experience dogs in host ways is not culture learning separate from language learning. There is a single, continuous process of learning a languaculture through participating in host practices, from the practice of calling the animal a “dog” to the practice of hunting raccoons with the help of the animal. Host speech is the major means through which host people make sense of their world, and that fact has obvious implications for how they need to nurture us into their practices of making sense out of their world. They will need to talk to us a lot giving us special help in understanding, and they will need to help us to talk to them in ways that they can understand.

These basic assumptions of the GPA have many ramifications, including some that surprise me.

“They stories”

We cannot experience actions of any human group neutrally. Either we experience the activities and objects we observe from the standpoint of our home world, or we enter the host world, participate in it, and experience it together with host people, increasingly in the way that they experience it. (If you read the paper, “Introduction to the Sociocultural Dimension,” you’ll see why we claim that the different languacultural worlds are truly disjoint—non-overlapping, at least in terms of the way host people experience their home world.)

For me as a Canadian, my observations of local people and their actions can be a continuation of my ongoing Canadian (home) story. That would be the case for sure with a Canadian tourist, having a Canadian holiday in a far-off country. Now a Canadian may make a kindly and positive Canadian story about her local neighbours, or more likely a condescending, ridiculing, even condemnatory story. In either case, the Canadian experiences the local people as part of her Canadian story. It is thus a “they story.” The Canadian story about what the host people are doing is radically disconnected from the story they themselves are experiencing as they live it. The GPA is about living their story with them, rather than telling my outsider’s story about them. (As an exercise, the next time you are with a group of fellow expats, count the number of times during the visit that the pronoun “they” is used with reference to the local people. “They” are a constant topic of conversations, aren’t “they”?)

Growing is participating and participating is growing.

Another important feature of the GPA is that we see virtually all growth as a matter of participation in host life at some level. We note that the large host world provides newcomers with few and brief opportunities to truly participate and grow in their shared life. So they need a host nurturer who will relate to them in such away that their participation and growth in the host

world is intense. We call these times with (usually paid) nurturers “*supercharged participation sessions*.” They “distill” life participation into a “concentrate”! In the early days, what the newcomers really need is a host person who is willing to *play* with them interactively while talking to them or talking with them. This is the nature of Phases 1 (Here-and-Now Communication) and 2 (Story Building) in particular. Later, the nurturer plays with us less and less, and explains life to us more and more. At every point along the way, our choice of supercharged participation activities is based on what level of participation is possible for us at that point.

Supercharged participation

We’ve used this term numerous times already, assuming that a person using the Phase 6 guide is familiar with the concept and its motivation. Now we define it in case it is new to some readers. We only grow in the host world by participation in it—being there physically isn’t the same as participating. The Australian can be in the midst of Japanese people, but relying on Australian meanings to interpret all he sees happening around him. He is only participating in the host world if his actions are on Japanese terms, using Japanese language, following Japanese practices.

Having said this, we are faced with the problem that for newcomers, the world doesn’t provide much opportunity to participate. For us to participate and grow, our participation needs qualities such as the following:

- 1) We understand much of what we hear (and actions we observe), though it is often a challenge for us.
- 2) We interact a lot using the host language, clarifying and negotiating meanings, and communicating about things that are a struggle for us at first (and soon become easier).
- 3) Our mental store of listening vocabulary grows by the hour (perhaps five to ten words an hour).
- 4) Our understanding of host life is more and more coming into line with the way host people experience that life as they live it
- 5) We talk a lot, and as needed, we get help in expressing our thoughts in a more host-like way than we could do without help, and in acting, in both words and (other) deeds, more and more “normally” in the contexts in which we are functioning.

Now, if you are a newcomer, you can spend many hours per day in Japanese social settings but have only minutes per day which conform to the above characteristics. Those minutes will be your real participation minutes, your growth minutes. Great. But what if we can turn those minutes into hours? Instead of existing Japanese social contexts, we get a special person, a nurturer, to create a little Japanese social context just for us. It is optimized for our growth, with all time spent in the context conforming to characteristics 1 to 5. These times are not “language lessons.” They are rather the opportunity to participate in Japanese practices and thus to grow. Hence we call them *supercharged participation sessions* filled with *supercharged participation activities*. Note that they are not a *substitute* for being “*out in the community*.” They *are* the community that we are “out in.” For newcomers, time spent “out in” non-supercharged community (for example, in the market) is time *out of community*, while our supercharged times with a special nurturer, perhaps in our home, in the nurturer’s home, or at a language centre, are times

in community. You aren't "in community" if you can't really participate in what is going on in such a way that you grow steadily. You-plus-your-nurturer in your little supercharged community is your *seed* community. It will grow into a sapling, then a tree that includes a widening range of relationships and activities.

In Phase 6, we are in social contexts many hours a week, and in generally, they conform to characteristics 1 through 5 above. We say that all of life has become supercharged. In Phase 1, only times with your nurturer using supercharged activities will be supercharged. There is a continuous growth from your little community in Phase 1 to your large and varied set of communities in Phase 6.

Where are we in Phase 6 and Phase un-6?

Phase 6 is our sixth and final guide to the Six-Phase Programme. The guides for Phase 1 through Phase 5 include supercharged participation activities for a recommended 1,500 hours, which may take a year and a half or more—sometimes a lot more—depending on the time available week-by-week for carrying out the activities. (There is a downward limit, however. A newcomer spending only two or three hours a week in participation activities is not really a growing participator in any meaningful sense. It won't help them to tell them, "Anything is better than nothing." Rather, we want them to know that it won't work, so that they'll have the opportunity to seek a lifestyle that can work.)

The first five phases were:

Phase 1: Here-and-Now Communication (100 hours)

Phase 2: Story-Building with visual aids (150 hours)

Phase 3: Shared Stories—understanding complicated speech because of shared knowledge (250 hours)

Phase 4: Deep-Life Sharing—knowing the host world intimately by knowing individuals intimately (500 hours)

Phase 5: Native-to-Native Discourses—confronting much that we still have difficulty understanding (500 hours)

We feel that doing these recommended 1,500 hours of activities will take a growing participator deep into the host languacultural world. Perhaps the biggest challenge in participation is developing the ability to understand speech and to converse. As those abilities grow, so does our exploration of what host experiences mean to host people. A pattern for steady growth into host practices, both verbal and nonverbal, is built into Phases 1 through 5.

Phase 6, Phase un-6 and "language proficiency levels"

Phase 6 is not really a "next stage" after Phases 1 through 5. Phase 6 is a road that we hope to find ourselves on. It is hoped that the activities of Phases 1 through 5 will put us on that road. If not, they should at least put us within reach of it. Most people in Phase un-6 are not within reach of the Phase 6 road.

As for those who have done Phases 1 through 5, once they developed basic conversational ability (Phase 3), they spent another 500 hours (Phase 4) coming to know host life—broadly and deeply—by coming to know individual host lives, and then another 500 hours (Phase 5) finding more to learn and learning it. Clearly, they no longer see purely with their "home eyes," (as someone in Phase un-6 is more prone to do) but rather they have developed eyes that are much more host-like in terms of how they see host life.

Still, if they become quickly lost when trying to follow a conversation between two host

people (who aren't making a point of including them in the conversation), then they are not yet on the Phase-6 road, but rather still on the Phase un-6 road, while someone may be on the Phase 6 road, as defined, who never heard of the Six-Phase Programme, for example, through intensive immersion. They have been growing participators without having known the term "growing participator."

Now some will ask what proficiency level I am talking about as Phase 6. I'm not. In terms of the most mature proficiency rating system—that of the U.S. government (FSI/ILR)—which goes from 0 (no ability) to 5 (equivalent to a university educated native language user) GPs in Phase 6 may be at various levels initially. The point is not where they are, but whether they will keep growing indefinitely.

I don't like such proficiency scales, as they imply a strong similarity between people at a given level, missing the fact that every individual is a unique person with a unique personality and identity within the host world. But I have thought a lot about these proficiency levels in relation to the Six Phase Programme. Imagine Susie is on the Phase 6 road, but just barely. Then I would expect that were she to be *legitimately* rated by a *certified* Oral Proficiency Interviewer, she would receive a rating of at least Level 2 ("Limited Working Proficiency"). There is also a chance that she would get a rating of Level 3 ("General Professional Proficiency"). Most likely, her rating would be Level 2+ (more than "Limited Working Proficiency" and less than "General Professional Proficiency").

In the US government rating circles experts talk about people in a condition they call "Terminal Level 1+" (Level 1 is called "Elementary Proficiency" or "Survival Proficiency"), and people who are "Terminal Level 2+" (Level 2 is called "Limited working proficiency"). This is the prospect, we feel, for the majority of those in Phase un-6 (assuming they have shown some serious concern to "learn the language" at all): Terminal 1+ or 2+.

If a host person were to watch two videos of someone in Phase 6, one made yesterday, and one made five years ago, the difference would be striking. If the videos were of someone who has been in Phase un-6 over the same period, the host person might have a hard time guessing which was yesterday and which was five years ago. That is the meaning of "terminal." We'll return to this below in connection with the question, "What if I quit the Six-Phase Programme after Phase X?"

How far does the person in Phase 6 have to go before they are "done"?

Have you ever been climbing a mountain, thinking that you could see the top that you were headed for, and then as you got closer and closer, and finally reached that "top," you discovered that it was not the top at all? Above it a much higher, bigger peak lay before you, yet to be climbed. People underestimate the scale of growing participation that is needed to reach a high level of participation. I overheard a conversation in a coffee shop in Kabul:

Bill: Hi John. I heard you were here.

John: Yeah. I've been here for a couple of weeks.

Bill: Have you started learning Dari yet?

John: Naw. I thought I'd just pick it up by Rosetta Stone or something.

I have often repeated this story thinking that the point of my telling it was obvious, only to be asked, "What's wrong with that? Don't you recommend Rosetta Stone?" Now, maybe the reader has the same reaction! No, unfortunately Rosetta Stone and similar programs expose you to only a miniscule sample of language; John apparently thinks that languages such as Dari are

very small, when in reality they are huge. Such a comment demonstrates a severe miscalculation of the magnitude of growth needed to become even distantly host-like. Also, a computer program is not a living person who can nurture you into their languacultural world.

So how long is the road of self-sustaining growth in growing participation? For convenience, let's define our goal as the proficiency level that the U.S. Government calls Level 4 (at times called Advanced Professional Proficiency and at times called Near-Native Proficiency). Two questions: 1) What does that kind of proficiency look like? 2) How long does it take to become like that?

What does that level of proficiency look like? The official (FILR-Federal Interagency Language Roundtable) description of Level 4 is as follows:

"Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful. Organizes discourse well, using appropriate rhetorical speech devices, native cultural references, and understanding. Language ability only rarely hinders him/her in performing any task requiring language; yet, the individual would seldom be perceived as native. Speaks effortless [*sic*] and smoothly and is able to use the language with a high degree of effectiveness, reliability, and precision for all representational purposes within the range of personal and professional experience and scope of responsibilities [that final qualification sounds like quite a big cop-out--G.T.]. Can serve as an informal interpreter in a range of unpredictable circumstances. Can perform extensive, sophisticated language tasks, encompassing most matters of interest to well-educated native speakers, *including tasks which do not bear directly on a professional specialty*" (p. 160-161, emphasis added)

Liskin-Gasparro (1987) gives us a more concrete concept of that Level 4 (in her terms, Distinguished Proficiency). She includes an example of an English Oral Proficiency Interview in which an Egyptian used the phrase "big nails" in English, instead one of the two normal host expressions in American English—"tent pegs" or "tent stakes." This and similar gaps in his vocabulary knowledge disqualified the interviewee from a Level 4 rating and left him with a Level 3 rating (General Professional Proficiency). It appears that a Level 4 language user, among other things, knows virtually all of the normal words and phraseology that are universally known and used among host people. All adult North American native English users know and use "tent pegs" and/or "tent stakes." The Egyptian interviewee did not. He seemed quite capable of carrying on work (teaching) and relationships and life in general in English, but not in a way that qualified as Near Native. For that, he still needed to grow quite a bit!

Check with non-native English users who you think are quite advanced. See what they call the things we use to hold a tent down. You may be surprised to find that by this lexical criterion, they are not near-native. Non-native language users at U.S. Government Level 4 are not as common as we think. Yet many of us, like those in the coffee shop in Kabul, tend to glibly believe that such a high level of ability is reasonably within reach of most of us, given a bit of effort. Well, getting onto a path that is ever leading us in the direction of "Near-Native Proficiency" is in reach of most of us, we believe, but given more than a bit of effort. And then, once we are on that Phase 6 road, we will most likely continue along it for all the years that we can give to it.

I meet people frequently who wonder whether they are perhaps near-native, or at least

well on their way. I wasn't surprised, therefore, when I read in Leaver (2003b) that she finds that people at Level 2 (Limited Working Proficiency) and 3 (General Professional Proficiency) tend to have an inflated view of their own ability, whereas people who were legitimately rated as Level 4 (Near Native Proficiency) had often become painfully aware of how non-native they still were. Yes, "Near Native" is still far from native—the Phase 6 road is long indeed. (When I mention this tendency of people at lower levels to have an inflated view of their ability, some respond, "Then I think I'm at Level 4, because I know I really sound bad." Clearly, in cases where I know some of the language, people who talk like that have an inflated view of their ability. We just don't want to accept the fact that the road is as long as it is.) I tire of hearing people in expat organisations talk of their "excellence in language." If only we could hear through host ears! One mother who lived with her son in a field situation insisted that her son, after four or five years, was "just like one of them." Mothers can exaggerate about their kids. The rest of us will do well to take a realistic view of how far we have to go once we are on the Phase 6 road.

The findings of Betty Lou Leaver's research give us a more concrete sense of the actual time involved in reaching Level 4 ("Near-Native" Proficiency) (Leaver, 2003a, Leaver & Atwell, 2002). Leaver and Atwell (2002) began with a search for people who had legitimately been rated as Level 4 by certified Oral Proficiency Interviewers. The authors found, first of all, that almost no one who begins learning another language as an adult ever does reach Level 4. Of the few who do (she and Atwell found fifty-plus who had), the average time it took them was seventeen years (which could be shortened to six years through intensive intervention).

Some of Leaver's specific findings also impress us with the magnitude of our journey:

- The *average* time it took to "reach" Level 4 was seventeen years (of seriously using the language)
- 40% of the 50+ participants in the study were, or had been, married to host people, and used the host language as the primary language of their marriage (p. 85).
- 76% had earned a university degree in the host country, working alongside host nationals in a normal university programme (p. 112).
- 86% of them were extensive readers in the host language.
- 100% of them (!) had lived in a multilingual environment during childhood (p. 147).

What do Leaver's findings mean for us? Well, first, they mean that few or none of us will ever be Near Native in anything other than our native languages! Second, if you are the rare exception, it may take you seventeen years, more or less, of heavy language use to get that far.

What then, does it mean to be in Phase 6? It means to have the opportunity to grow and grow and grow, right to the end of your sojourn. What does it mean to be in Phase un-6? It means to miss out on the beautiful journey deeper and deeper into host life.

What happens to those who quit supercharged participation in earlier phases?

So far, a minority of those who begin the Six-Phase Programme go all the way to the end of Phase 5 (Native-to-Native Discourses). Probably more than half only do Phase 1 (Here-and-Now Communication), the First 100 Hours, which is 7% of the recommended 1,500 hours. We're glad they do that much. It gives most of them a high-powered launch, and proves to them they can participate and grow. A smaller proportion do Phase 2 (Story Building) in addition to Phase 1. Still fewer people do Phase 3 (Shared Stores), and so on. Some people decide they don't

agree with the emphasis on listening comprehension ability, or with our neglect of Latin-sounding terms like “accusative case” and “subjunctive.” Hopefully, if they quit after 100 hours of the Six-Phase Programme, they’ll nevertheless find another 1,400 hours of activities, graduated in difficulty over time, helping them to develop a listening vocabulary of over ten thousand words, and to explore the host world as host people know it. However, I’m afraid that some quit the Six-Phase Programme in a spirit of “that’s enough!”

Now we can’t insist that it is necessary to do 1,500 hours of supercharged participation activities or formal language learning in order to get into Phase 6. Let’s be clear about that. (See Ioup, et al., 1994 for a clear counterexample—an adult foreigner who learned Egyptian Arabic to the point that she could pass as an Egyptian, and did so entirely by immersion.)

Here’s our own hypothetical example of someone who got into Phase 6 without any supercharged activities: Ed was largely cut off from fellow Australians, in fact from fellow Anglophones, for his entire fifteen-year sojourn in Japan. Almost his entire life during those years was with Japanese people who didn’t know English. That is, he had a full-time host life, and very little home life. For much of the time he was married to a Japanese woman, and had children, and they carried on their family life entirely in Japanese, and in Japanese ways. He also completed a four-year university degree in a Japanese university (he was a Japanese Literature major). He ended up with a sales job that required him to relate heavily, in face-to-face interaction, with Japanese people, in Japanese ways, using Japanese all day every day. He thinks the Six-Phase Programme is silly, and recommends that anyone who wants to learn Japanese should do it the way he did: take Japanese 101 in a university in Australia! Worked for him! Should work for anyone!

Setting aside the exceptions, like Ed, who prove the rule, what happens if someone quits the Six-Phase Programme (and doesn’t replace it even with formal language courses) and relates to host people on their terms in their language for at least a few hours a week? Here are our expectations:

You quit after Phase 1 or 2 and depend on everyday interaction alone:

- For a while after you quit, your talking may keep becoming easier for you, leading you to think you are really growing. Because your inner resources for talking (words, constructions, etc.) are so limited, you get to use all of them a lot, and soon come to sound fluent.
- Over several years you won’t actually change much in terms of how you are experienced by host people.
- You may be a Terminal 1+ (Elementary Proficiency/Survival Proficiency) and hence a not-so-growing participator. (Your vocabulary, your knowledge of how host people talk and what they talk about, and your experience processing complex speech, are all too limited to expect more than this without a *lot* of fresh supercharged efforts.)

For those familiar with the Bill, Harry, Jane, Ernest scenarios, these people are likely to be Janes.

You quit after Phase 3 or 4 and depend on everyday interaction alone:

- For a while afterward, your talking may keep becoming easier for you, leading you to think you are really growing. (In fact, the fewer inner resources you have to draw on, the more you get to use those you have, and hence the quicker you can sound “fluent.” If you have a lot of inner resources to draw on, you will sound

like you are struggling for a longer time—the cost of growing. For example, if you only know five hundred words, then every time you speak twenty thousand words, you use your words an average of forty times each. A similar principle would apply to using grammatical constructions. So if your resources are limited, you get to use all of them, on average, a lot more than if you have vast resources, say, ten thousand words. If you have ten thousand words in there, then for every twenty thousand words you speak, you use each word an average of only two times, so you have a lot more resources to struggle with before you've used them enough to do so fluently.)

- If you go on having extensive participation in your host life, you may be a “Terminal 2+” and hence, a not-so-growing participator. (And the parenthetical remarks above regarding your vocabulary, etc. in connection with “Terminal 1+” still hold in these cases as well.)

For those familiar with the Bill, Harry, Jane, Ernest scenarios, these people are likely to be Harrys. (Bill is, of course, in Phase 6, while the others are in Phase un-6.) I can distinguish Harrys from long-standing Bills by the time I'm in Phase 2 or 3 myself—I can understand all that the Harrys say to host people, but until I'm in Phase 6, I'll miss much of what a long-standing Bill says!

How I Got into Phase 6 and un-6 in the Russian and Kazakh worlds, respectively

For a long time, I have been on the Phase 6 road in Russian, whenever I'm in a Russian context (which unfortunately isn't often any more). I comprehend large amounts easily, and in fact, understand virtually all that I hear around me in everyday life. Thus I can just sit there and watch myself grow whenever I'm involved very much with Russians, or even when watching a movie or reading a book in Russian.

In the case of Kazakh I have not had the same opportunity in terms of time to focus on growing participation, but from time to time I have set about to raise my ability. I essentially ceased "full-time languaculture learning" (which was never more than ten hours a week) when I was about 150 hours into Phase 4 (which takes a recommended 500 hours, and is followed by the recommended 500 hours of Phase 5). So with Kazakh languaculture, I'm in Phase un-6. For a time I seemed to grow simply by being in Kazakh environments. As time went on, though, it became more and more apparent that I was really just holding my own and not growing much. I grow, but not enough to change to a degree that is obvious to Kazakh people who know me. For that to happen, I would either need intensive immersion for many years, on the scale of Ed's as described earlier, or I would need hundreds of hours of supercharged participation sessions such as those described in the guides to Phases 4 and 5.

I came up with amazing solitary activities, such as watching a Kazakh TV program in a browser window, and keeping an on-line dictionary open in a second window. Even were I to do that for hundreds of hours, I don't think it would count for much without live social interaction. Two or three times, I've done twenty or thirty hours of supercharged interaction. When I do that, I do really see growth in myself, but only I see it, as it is not enough growth for host people to experience a noticeable difference in me. Again, that would take a few hundred hours of supercharged activities. I don't do that. I'm in Phase un-6.

Thinking back on my Russian experience, we didn't have the current, refined Six-Phase Programme, though my supercharged activities and the way they changed were in that spirit. I recall that I spent about 500 hours doing supercharged participation activities before going to

Russia. During my two years in Russia, Russian languaculture was life-absorbing. While interacting with people heavily in everyday life, I also did hundreds of hours of further supercharged activities. I audited two or three university courses in which I was the only non-Russian student. After my two years in Russia I was back in Canada for several months with a *large* collection of Russian videos. I probably spent at least two hours per day listening intensively to videos, pausing, rewinding, looking up unfamiliar words, and going on (what we call *massaging* the videos on my own). Such solitary activities were effective, I believe, only because of the level of ability I had already reached through face-to-face interaction. After several months of massaging Russian videos like that in Canada, I moved to Kazakhstan and was surprised that in the most challenging multi-person Russian conversational contexts my mental language processor was racing right along, coping easily with all that was being said.

With Kazakh matters were different. Those over me told me at the outset of my time in Kazakhstan, “You know Russian, but we would like you to learn a little Kazakh as well.” I did 150 hours of supercharged participation activities in 2001, 250 hours in 2002, 250 hours in 2003 and perhaps 150 hours in 2004, and that was it. That is a long time ago! Kazakh languaculture never became as life-absorbing as Russian did, though as time went on, and the GPA developed, the life got a lot better. When my supervisors asked me at the outset to “learn a little Kazakh,” I wish I had had the GPA, and hence would have replied, “It’s not about a language to be learned, but a life to be lived, and a people to be loved.” I needed to give a healthy portion of my time to my Kazakh host life, to the end of my sojourn. In terms of the U.S. government rating scale, I feel I’m one of those Terminal 2+ people in Kazakh languaculture, and I think I have just helped you understand why that was, and why my Russian experience was different.

We recently spent three weeks disposing of our earthly goods in Kazakhstan, and busy as we were, we had two supercharged hours per day for the second two of the three weeks. I hope I will always do that in the future, whenever I’m among one of my former host people groups, unless I’m clearly in Phase 6, in which case just being with people will be enough to revive me.

How about 100 or 300 hours to a *new you* in Phase un-6?

People in Phase un-6 sometimes seek help in “getting off the plateau” (that is, breaking out of the Terminal 1+ or Terminal 2+ situation).

Some have two desires:

1. They want to “get off the plateau.”
2. They want to avoid altering their life very much.

That makes matters simple. The person just has to decide which of these two desires is the most important, and abandon the other one.

I am greatly thankful to Betty Lou Leaver (2003b) for clarifying this issue. She is the source of the figures 100 hours and 300 hours. Her claim is that to change in a way that is detectable will take at least 100 hours if you are at a low level of proficiency, and 300 hours if you are at a higher level of ability (which might include Terminal 1+ and 2+). I find that so motivating. I don’t have to ask, “Can I change?” I just have to ask, “Can I come up with 300 hours for supercharged activities?” This can also serve as a wake-up call to anyone who wants to hang on to both desires 1 and 2 above.

Leaver states (personal communication) that these hours should be:

. . . teacher-mediated exposure and practice. Then, yes, we can and do see changes after

AT LEAST 100/300 hours, depending upon the level. ... Note: a "teacher" does not have to be a foreign language teacher, nor the learning restricted to foreign language. Quite the opposite. We request subject matter professors who do not know English and who have never taught their language... Also, the words "at least" are very important. Some folks take much more -- and without teacher mediation it can take years

You get her picture. Three hundred hours in which I'm in, say, a history course with a host professor who doesn't know my language but must see that I learn a lot about history. He treats me pretty much like a local student, with the major difference that helping me to grow in my communication ability is also central to his understanding of his role.

We have generalised Leaver's picture to include any supercharged participation activities with the following characteristics:

- 1) We hear speech that we understand but that is challenging for us.
- 2) We interact a lot, clarifying and negotiating meanings, and communicating about things that are a struggle for us at first (and soon become easier).
- 3) Our listening vocabulary grows by the hour (we might aim for 3000 new listening vocabulary in the 300 hours).
- 4) We are constantly learning more about the host world as host people know it.
- 5) We talk a lot, and as needed, we get help expressing our thoughts in a more host-like way than we could without help.

Although Leaver doesn't cite research to support her claims about 100 hours and 300 hours, I consider her well-qualified to make these claims on the basis of her unusually vast experience in observing and assessing changes in language learners. She herself was officially rated as Level 4 in Russian and French, and as Level 3 in German and Spanish, and all in all, she has some ability in seventeen languages. She has observed countless others in detail, as she has held major administrative positions at the Foreign Service Institute and the Defense Language Institute and, most importantly, has personally conducted over 1,000 official Oral Proficiency Interviews. In other words, she knows what language learners look like in flesh and blood, and when a change is detectable. For a skilled Oral Proficiency Interviewer to be able to detect any difference in a person's ability will require at least that many hours of activities in which people use the host language in ways that powerfully promote growth.

The title of this section mentions a *new you*. That is an important concept in the GPA. We're not so interested in "proficiency" in the sense of some attribute of an individual; rather, we are concerned about our host identity. Who is the *me* that host people experience when I participate in their world? What will it take for that *me* to clearly become someone else—a *new me*? The difference between the current *me* and the *new me* in the experience of host people corresponds to the detectable difference in the experience of an Oral Proficiency Interviewer between your current proficiency level and a higher level or sub-level. That is, the *new you* is what takes 300 hours (or at lower levels 100 hours) to happen. Isn't that cool? A *new you* is as accessible to you as that—just find those 300 hours for supercharged activities.

Or you can go on as you are in Phase un-6, believing you're growing, or at least hoping you are, while in terms of the way host people experience you, you stay the same.

Choosing supercharged activities for Phase un-6

I'm going to have to assume you are familiar with the earlier phases and their activities. If you are in Phase un-6, and this Six-Phase business is all new to you, please get the guides to

Phases 1 through 5 and skim and scan and read enough that you know what I'm talking about in this section. In fact, if you are at a low level of participation ability, you might even consider doing Phase 1 as your first 100 hours to a *new you*.

If you quit the Six-Phase Programme in some particular phase, I would recommend that you go back and pick up from there. If you are in Phase un-6 as a Terminal 2+, but haven't done activities from the earlier phases, all activities from Phases 2 through 5, or at least 2 through 4, are likely to be fruitful for you (Phase 5 activities might be over your head, and thus less fruitful). For example, Phase 2 activities (Story Building using picture stories) are always useful (even in Phase 6), because each growing participator will carry out the activity at his or her current ability level, and they are likely to experience a burst in listening vocabulary growth, and perhaps in fluency as well. Phase 3 activities are also useful even if you are more advanced than someone who has reached Phase 3 in the progression of the Six-Phase Programme. The Phase 3 Scripts-of-Life activity will provide an infusion of vocabulary; the Phase 3 World Stories activity will give you experience with some more abstract vocabulary and discourse devices that you may have been filtering out as you listen to host speech. (One person who was admired by her expat peers as highly advanced encountered dozens of new words in a five- or ten-minute version of the world story of Cinderella told in her host language.) The Phase 3 Reminiscing activity will help you to learn more of how host people experience their world.

After some Phase 2 and Phase 3 activities, you can concentrate on Phase 4 (Deep Life Sharing) interviewing. A drawback of Phase 4 interviews is that they often do not bring in a lot of new vocabulary. You can occasionally use an activity from an earlier phase (for example, describing a "busy picture" as in Phase 2) to bring up your hourly average to ten new words per hour. (In the Six-Phase Programme, we recommend seven to eight new words per hour as a goal, but since these 300 hours that you are doing are "remedial," let's up the goal to putting ten new words per hour into your mental store of listening vocabulary.)

These 300 hours are supposed to be supercharged, which distinguishes them from interaction with host people in everyday life. So they mustn't be 300 hours more of what you are doing already. I have seen people pay a lot of money to be with a teacher at a language centre only to sit there and carry on the same sort of unstructured conversation they had with their house helper earlier in the day, and then with the taxi driver on the way to the language centre. Doing more of the same with a paid nurturer is not a strategy for heavy change and growth.

Higher-level supercharged participation

Could there be any point in someone who is in Phase 6 (as opposed to un-6) scheduling some supercharged activities? We say that in Phase 6 all (or at least much) of your host life has become supercharged (with many of the characteristics [1-6] above). Still you can do things to seriously accelerate your growth. Betty Lou Leaver holds that the average of seventeen years to reach U.S. Government Level Four (Near-Native Proficiency) can be shortened to six years with the right intervention. We mentioned her example of "content instruction" such as taking a history course where the instructor doesn't know your language, and is committed to helping you grow in his languaculture generally, even as you learn history, and involves you in intensive interaction, as well as reading and writing. So if you can manage to do supercharged activities in Phase 6, and want to do so, then go for it! The 300-hour rule can still apply: for host people to see a *new you*, plan on at least 300 hours of supercharged activities.

If, however, you can't manage 300 hours, you can grow in particular areas of communication in a smaller period of time, such as twenty or thirty hours.

In the GPA we call these various areas of communication host “discourses” and becoming better able to communicate means becoming a party to those ongoing host discourses. A particular host discourse may include what host people are saying about a topic, what they agree on and take for granted, and ways in which they may disagree with one another. A host discourse in a broader sense will also include all the physical objects, actions, statuses and roles of people, etc., associated with particular communication situations in which the spoken discourses play a role, along with the use of all that stuff in combination with the spoken discourse.

A few detailed supercharged activities

Suppose you choose the discourse of making “toasts” such as at a birthday party or other celebration. In such activities we find it is good to have an “A” stage and a “B” stage parallel to Phases 2A and B. Recall that in Phase 2A, the GP is in the lead, while in 2B, the nurturer is in the lead.

Toast-Making-A (GP in the lead)

Before the activity: Brainstorm all possible occasions (wedding, anniversary, birthday, house warming, etc.) for toasting, and people or groups who might be toasted (a major political figure, an employer, an employee, an ordinary neighbour, a young person, mothers, mothers-in-law, janitors, New Zealanders, etc.). It might be better yet if you could think of real people and real situations you have been in, and then give “a toast you might have given.” Attempt to make each toast as elaborate as you can. (You can use milk to make the toasts, if you prefer!) Make sure you actually do the whole act of toasting including what is said and what is done nonverbally.

During the activity:

Step 1. You are in the lead. Pretend you are in a particular setting, attempting to make a toast for a particular person or group. Don’t worry if you hem and haw. You record your effort as you do it, and then...

Step 2. Go through the recording, with your nurturer, in the spirit of the GPA activity *Record Yourself for Feedback*, which you have used in earlier phases. Keep track of all the nurturer’s suggestions for improving the toast you made. Often you may be “negotiating meanings,” that is, trying to get the nurturer to understand the meaning you were trying to get across.

Step 3. Record the nurturer making the revised toast, and add the recording to your listening library. (Listen to it before the next meeting, and many times after, especially when you are expecting to make a toast.)

Toast-Making-B (Nurturer in the lead)

After ten or twenty hours of Toast-Making-A with you in the lead, move on to Toast-Making-B, with the nurturer in the lead. We find that this “A-B” pattern keeps the interaction in your growth zone.

Step 1: Drawing from your list of occasions for toasts and people or groups to toast, choose an example for your nurturer to make up the toast. Record her doing it.

Step 2: Massage the toast. Add the recording to your listening library.

Step 3: Listen to the toast before meeting again.

Step 4: When you meet again, make a similar toast, drawing on the one the nurturer made the previous meeting, but not repeating it verbatim, but rather, as in all “retelling tasks,” do it in your own words, reflecting what you are personally able to do at the time.

Note that all nurturers are not created equal when the activities involve such special discourses. In Russia and Kazakhstan, there were people who could only make a toast with a string of clichés, and others who were more eloquent. You might look for a nurturer in the latter category.

Needs analysis

Where did we get the idea of “toasts”? And where will we get other ideas of discourses to participate in? Well, we might have drawn “toasts” from a list of needs that resulted from a needs assessment.

The activity of toasting is important in Russia and Kazakhstan. It isn’t something you do every day, but is something you may do several times a year. Growing participants find this particularly stressful. You may have wondered why anyone would spend ten to twenty hours in such an activity. Well, for one thing, doing the activity involves you in lots of interaction with your nurturer, providing the “topic of conversation,” and so it helps you to grow in more ways than improving your toasting ability. In fact, in terms of what it reveals about host values, it should be a gold mine. However, even if the only fruit was leaning to toast better, for many people, when the moment to make a toast arrived once again, they would be delighted that they had spent those ten or twenty hours doing it as a supercharged activity. Toasting is something that 1) they could not do very well at all, and though 2) they do it infrequently, 3) when they do it, the ability to do it well is of the utmost urgency to them, as they are doing it before an audience. Keep points 1, 2 and 3 in mind. To do a needs analysis, brainstorm with your nurturer and other expats and host people to make a long list of communication situations. For each item in the list, give yourself from 0 to 5 points depending on how often you need to take part in that communication situation (0 means never, 5 means often). Give yourself from 0 to 5 points based on how important it is to you when you need to do it. Then, subtract from 0 to 10 points based on how well you can already participate in the communication situation:

Communication situation	How often (0 = never +5 = often)	How important when it comes up? (0 = no importance; +5= great importance)	How well can you do it already? (0 = can’t do it at all; -10 = highly skilled at it)	Adding the three together:
Getting a taxi	5	5	-10	0
Making toasts	+1	+5	-2	4
Getting car repaired	+2	+3	-1	4
Using beauty parlor	+3	+5	-1	7
Playing football	+2	+2	-5	-1
Etc.				
Etc., etc. etc.				

Based on this (admittedly subjective analysis) we won’t use supercharged time for improving our host-likeness when getting a taxi or playing football (including what we need to say as part of playing football). We might want to dedicate some supercharged time to improving

our host-likeness in communication contexts of getting our car fixed and using the beauty parlor.

Getting-Car-Fixed activity, prelude:

For starters, what you might do is go right back to Phase 1 (Here-and-Now Communication). You and your nurturer go out to your car (or get a diagram of all the internal and external parts of a car). Fill in holes in your vocabulary using the Phase 1 Dirty Dozen technique. This can include objects (“Where is the lug wrench?”) and actions, (“Loosen the lug nut.”) You could also do a variety of listen and point activities (and record them) where the nurturer makes comments about different cars or their parts (“Which one is four-wheel drive? Which is a four-door?”)

Getting-Car-Fixed-A (GP in the lead)

Step 1: Then go back to all the objects you learned (fuel injector, water pump, etc.) and record-for-feedback yourself telling your nurturer all the things that might go wrong with that part and need repair.

Step 2: Go over the recordings of what you said, in the spirit of Record-for-Feedback, making note of all that the nurturer feels a need to correct.

Step 3: Record the nurturer telling the final version of this text, mentioning car parts and telling all that might go wrong with them. Add this to your Listening Library.

Getting-Car-Fixed-B (nurturer in the lead)

Step 1: The nurturer chooses a list of car parts you have not yet dealt with, and does the same task that you did in Getting-Car-Fixed-A. This is recorded.

Step 2: Massage the recording. Add it to your Listening Library.

Step 3: Listen to it before the next meeting.

Step 4: Retell in your own words, drawing from your nurturer’s version, but not repeating it verbatim from rote memory.

Using-Beauty-Parlor-A

Here’s one possibility for improving your ability to communicate with your beautician.

Before the activity: Get some magazines in which people in the photos have a wide variety of hairstyles.

Step 1: Take the first picture. Tell your nurturer what you think the person might have said to the beautician to get that hairstyle. Record yourself saying this. It may be agony for you.

Step 2: Then go over the recording with your nurturer. By negotiating meanings interactively, you can help your nurturer to see what you were trying to say, and make a note of all the things she would have expressed differently from how you expressed them.

Step 3: Then record the nurturer’s version—not what she would have said, but her improved version of what you said.

Repeat Steps 1 to 3 many times.

Step 4: Listen to the recording before your next meeting.

The fact that the nurturer’s version is founded on your version keeps it in your growth zone. This is more effective, we find, than simply having the nurturer tell you what *she* would have said to the beautician to get that hairstyle, and then trying to learn from how she said it. Her fully spontaneous version may not feed your growth at this point as much as her improvements of your version.

Using-Beauty-Parlor-B

Step 1: Using a picture you haven’t used yet, the nurturer will say what she would have said to get that hair style in the beauty parlor. You record this.

Step 2: Massage the recording

Repeat steps 1 and 2 many times

Step 3: Listen to the recording before the next meeting.

Step 4: Retell in your own words, drawing on the nurturer's version.

Using-Beauty-Parlor-Scripts of life

Have your nurturer describe in small steps the experience of visiting the beauty parlor. Expand it, if need be. Massage it if need be. In the next session, tell it in your own words.

Using-Beauty-Parlor-Role-play

Now have your nurturer pretend she is you, and you are the beautician. She acts out the entire visit to the beauty parlor. You hopefully have some ideas from the script of life regarding what the beautician does and says.

You can then switch roles.

Using-Beauty-Parlor-Shared experience and reminiscing

Now you are ready to make your visit to the beauty parlor. Your nurturer goes with you. Try to make small talk about hair styles—what you like and don't like, for example—with the beautician. Return home with your nurturer and do the Reminiscing Activity from Phase 3.

You have now gone a long way toward becoming a host-like participant in the host discourse of beauty parlors.

I probably let some readers down

In the guides to Phases 1 through 5, the motivation was to go beyond providing some general principles and a couple of examples, and then expecting you to make up your own activities. Rather we tried to give a lot of step-by-step information for each activity in each phase. In this section I've reverted to giving some principles and a couple of examples! That is because the range of possible communication situations in which you may want to become more host-like is practically limitless, and will vary from one languacultural world to the next. Now you may feel like you wouldn't be creative enough to come up with my "toasts," "getting your car repaired," and "beauty parlor" activities. Well, brainstorm with others, fellow expats and host people. First brainstorm a list of communications situations. Then brainstorm supercharged activities for each.

If you don't want to bother trying to be creative, you can simply do Phase 4 interviewing of a famous toastmaster, an auto mechanic and a beautician, or whatever walk of life you are interested in. You will find that this alone has a strong impact on your ability to communicate and otherwise act in a more host-like way.

Hole finding

Unless you are at the U.S. Government Level 4 or 5, then you probable still have a ton of "holes" in your knowledge of the languaculture. It is always fun and profitable to find a bunch of holes and fill them in.

In hole finding, you deliberately find things you can't say. A common version is to watch a silent movie, and try to narrate the plot right as you watch, including talking about the setting, activities, goals, motives, etc. This can be fun and rewarding for those who thought they were more advanced than they actually were. In discussing a wordless movie, you'll also appreciate how every action is meaningful within the languaculture of the movie, and how many actions, objects and situations are understood differently by your host people than they are by your home people. In addition to familiar wordless movies such as Charlie Chaplin and Mr. Bean, I

recommend the movie *Kelin* ("Daughter-in-Law"), a recent eighty-minute drama by Kazakh Film (available from amazon.com). It has no talking but a very full plot. It is supposedly set in the second century, but its plot will be fully intelligible only to contemporary Central Asians (if them). That doesn't matter, since you are interested in the meanings host people see, and how those differ from the meanings you see.

**Private activities that are supercharged once you have laid the social foundation:
Mass electronic media and reading**

While you were in Phases 1 and 2, much of the speech you heard going on in your environment did little to further your growth. You could not make heads or tails of what you heard, you didn't recognise words, or only recognised scattered words, and could not make out phrases and sentences, or if you did understand a sentence, you couldn't link it into the ongoing discourse. In all such cases, the fact that you didn't carry out such comprehension processes meant that you didn't advance in your ability to carry them out. You learn by doing! By Phase 3, more and more of what you heard in your host environment did further your growth: Each time that you recognised and understood a word, or you were able to group words into phrases and sentences, or you were able to relate a sentence to the larger discourse (story, argument, conversations, etc.), your ability to do so improved.

In Phase 6, simply hearing speech advances your ability to understand speech, since you successfully carry out the whole range of comprehension processes. And you often clearly hear and understand words that are new to you, since the context makes it clear what they mean. Common word combinations blaze through your understanding machine! Familiar names, places and events become familiar because you hear about them repeatedly. The processes of grouping words into phrases and connecting sentences into larger discourses is ever becoming faster and easier as you do these things for hundreds or thousands of hours.

As you share the ongoing story of life among host people, you also continue to advance your understanding of the host world. Understanding the host world is crucial to understanding host speech, since much that is assumed and left unsaid is necessary to understanding, and the assumptions are those of your host world, not your home world. And conversely, understanding speech is crucial to understanding the host world. Finally, subtle reasoning processes become more host-like as you are constantly exposed to them in host discourses.

The foundations for Phase 6 were laid socioculturally in Phases 1 through 5 through massive, face-to-face, supercharged interaction. Like human mental life generally, the early learning really requires interaction with live humans who meet you in your "growth zone." Later on, you have your own private, internal social life—a continuation of the earlier, public social life inside you.

Participation through mass media?

This means that as you grow more and more, you may increasingly come to be able to grow a lot without even being with others directly. Research has shown that children do not learn a language by hearing it over the radio. Once they know enough, though, radio listening can be a means of further growth. We don't see why it should be any different for adult growing participators. Learning is initially social and visible to observers, but we eventually take control of those social-interactive practices and use them privately as well.

Radio, television, video and print media—fiction, children's school textbooks, university school textbooks, magazines, newspapers, product instructions, etc.—become great contributors

to your ongoing growth. As a strategy for increasing the time you allocate to your host life, it may be far easier to buy a book or DVD or turn on the TV or radio than it is to change your workplace from a “Little America” to a host community of practice! This assumes that you are at an advanced enough level that you can understand what you read or hear, with at least a bit of effort. This cannot be a substitute for a large amount of face-to-face time, but can be a valuable supplement that feeds into the face-to-face time and accelerates your growth at more advanced levels. I described the impact of Russian videos in helping me to finish climbing onto the Phase 6 road even while I was away from Russia.

If finding such resources in minority languages as opposed to national, world and regional languages is relevant to you, this issue is addressed in the Phase 5 guide. With minority languages and displaced languages in particular, sound recordings will be a priceless boon. It is possible to carry hundreds of hours of recordings in your mp3 player (2012 technology) and to redeem the time on buses and sleepless nights.

The cognitive processes described in the first paragraph of this section—recognising words, understanding them, grouping them into phrases, etc. are called "parsing." (Strictly speaking, parsing is the grouping of words into phrases and sentences, but the word is also used more broadly for the whole process of making a stream of sounds into a stream of understood words, phrases and sentences.) My brain parses Russian pretty readily. And the frequent experience of “Oh, that’s how you can say that in Russian” is cool!

Kazakh is still a lot harder for my brain to parse. I've heard the weather forecast on TV hundreds of times, and the expression meaning "overcast" was always there. A couple of years ago, the phrase suddenly jumped out at me. All the words in the phrase, with their suffixes and grammatical relations, were well known to me for a decade before that. The fact that it jumped out meant that my brain finally parsed it. I’m sure I could have had that experience ten years earlier, simply by paying much better attention! (Or I could have simply recorded and massaged a weather forecast.)

Anyway, if you are in Phase 6, your mental "parser" will always be improving as you use it. If you are in Phase un-6, it may not improve much unless you do supercharged activities to make it improve! That has certainly been my personal experience and my observation with other people.

However, if you don’t have the chance to speak, to interact, then however much you may understand speech, the impact on your speaking ability will be much less than it needs to be. Psycholinguists know a great amount now about the process involved in both listening and speaking (and reading and writing) and they are distinct processes, highly dependent on experience for their development (experience listening with understanding, experience speaking, experience conversing, experience reading, experience writing). You can make some progress in speaking ability through a large amount of listening, but nothing comparable to the progress you will make if you also do a lot of speaking and interacting as well. In fact a lot of recent research has shown that even in our native language, the way our conversation partner says things will influence the way we say things. Interacting conversationally changes people!

Be especially on the lookout for broadcasts at your optimal level of difficulty. In Phase 6, you understand most of what you hear in everyday interaction, so you should really jump at anything you hear on T.V. or elsewhere that is challenging for you and try to record such material. My Russian videos included many made from television. I noted a sitcom that I could follow well from relatively early on (and which was rich in revelations of Russian life). I noted another talk show that was especially challenging (also rich in revelations of Russian life), even

in Phase 6. In it people carried on colloquial, spontaneous, high-energy multi-person conversations about life problems they were embroiled in. I made many recordings of both the sitcom and the talk show. The former I could simply watch with great benefit. The latter I needed to massage a bit. The latter was especially valuable in Phase 6, as it was still challenging.

We discussed news broadcasts in the Phase 3 guide in connection with late Phase 3 (the Shared Stories Phase), because, at least in the case of world news, you have a lot of background related to the stories you are hearing. Documentaries are also quite useful, and may be in areas in which you have a lot of background (also relevant to late Phase 3).

The great value of reading in Phase 6 (in languacultures where relevant)

An important way you can accelerate your growth in many languacultures is by reading. Leaver (2003a) found that most people who reached Level 4 on the U.S. government scale read extensively in the host language (in the words of one, they read “promiscuously”). You mainly read on your own, not with a nurturer. Reading aloud to a paid nurturer is a pretty clear waste of money! Read on your own, and let the nurturer read the same materials on her own, and then discuss them together. You can discuss the new words that you encountered (and make a recording of such discussions in order to further refresh and strengthen those words in your mental listening vocabulary store). Reading also takes you from the area of everyday language to more academic language. This is why we urge growing participators to get going on reading as soon as their ability reaches a level at which there exist written materials that they could understand if they were to read them. (Struggling with materials way over our heads is not a good use of time.) This assumes that reading is a significant host practice (at least for an educated segment of the host people).

Reading is a struggle at first, and becomes smoother with experience and with overall languacultural growth. I know one person who did little of a creative nature in his growing participation—certainly not the activities of the Six-Phase Programme. But he did two things: he spent a lot of time in villages in face-to-face interaction, and he spent a lot of time reading on his own. When he encountered unknown words he looked them up in a dictionary, not a bilingual dictionary, but in a standard host dictionary written entirely in the host language. By pressing on with lots of face-to-face interaction, reading, and vocabulary learning, he grew far, though I cannot say if he ended up in Phase 6 or Phase un-6. He was satisfied with his ability level in connection with his work and social life. So was I.

In some cases, such as in Arab countries, the written language is so different from the spoken language that learning it will require a large amount of discussion with your nurturer, but that discussion will be in spoken Arabic, not written Arabic! In essence, it is as if she is helping you to read Latin or Greek. When students are learning Latin or Greek, there is a lot of communication between the students and teacher regarding what they are reading, but they don't communicate *in* Latin or Greek to talk about what they are reading. They talk about it in a spoken language that they all know. Reading written Arabic and discussing it (massaging it) in spoken Arabic with a nurturer will definitely increase your ability to deal with academic language and other formal language such as the language of news and public addresses.

Getting practical (at last): It's not a language to be learned but a life to be lived

We've talked in the guides to Phases 2, 3, 4, and 5 about a variety of aspects of host life that growing participators participate in, and ways to combine them with supercharged activities. We've always said that in Phase 6 you can continue having supercharged participation sessions

as desired, but even if you don't, since you understand most of what is said and done around you, you'll not stop growing, as long as you don't stop participating (including participating in areas of life that are still new to you). However, you get off of that road, and onto the Phase un-6 road, whenever you quit participating in the host world for a period of time, either because your home life or competing host lives strangle it, or because you interrupt or terminate your sojourn.

Now we must return to that issue of those competing lives, especially our home life and our primary host life, recalling that our waking hours are finite, and that any time given to one life will be taken away from the other. It's not a language to be learned but a life to be lived.

We've emphasised the differences between Phase 6 and Phase un-6. However, they also have some common dangers, as indicated by the possibility of sliding out of Phase 6. Getting back into Phase 6 after leaving it is a lot easier than getting into Phase 6 from Phase un-6. Still, it also possible for someone in Phase un-6 to make the most of their opportunities, and who knows—possibly end up in Phase 6. Getting back into Phase 6 after sliding off the road is a matter of restoring a healthy lifestyle. Getting from Phase un-6 to Phase 6 may require supercharged activities plus a healthy lifestyle. People in Phase un-6 are often depending on their lifestyle to keep them growing. So for everyone who does not have “language learning” as their work assignment, but wants to keep growing, lifestyle is a key issue. We will focus on it for most of the remainder of the guide.

It's not a language to be learned but a life to be lived. The GPA maintains that humanity is divided by languacultural differences into a large number of different worlds. When we approach a new languacultural world and hear its people talking, we find at once that the “wall of noise” shuts us out of that world. Behind that wall of noise, the life of the host people is moving forward. We need to be nurtured into that host world, so that we are living our own host life alongside our home life. Once we have basically crossed the wall of noise, enough that we can have a host life at all apart from our supercharged activities, we need to be apprenticed over time more and more deeply into the practices that guide that life (and among the practices, listening and speaking play a central role).

A concrete, though hypothetical example

At the same time, we bring our home life with us. More often than the converse, our home life is always threatening to strangle our host life. The opposite—our host life strangling our home life—just about doesn't happen. Let's consider a concrete, though hypothetical, challenging situation. In order to tangle the knot really well, we'll have it be a team of Filipinos living four lives. They created an NGO in Nepal to serve the Ghosa people, and hope to participate in the Ghosa world as their primary host world, since that is the focus of their NGO. Their four lives are: 1) their home-world life with fellow Filipinos in Nepal, using, let's say, Cebuano; 2) their broader expat life in a "global," English-dominated world in Nepal; 3) their national Nepali life in a world dominated by Nepali; and 4) their intended primary host life among the Ghosa minority in Nepal, who use their own variety of Urdu.

Clearly, those Filipinos' Ghosa life is under constant threat from the other three lives! How is their Ghosa life possibly going to compete, especially when each Filipino adult lives with a Filipino spouse and Filipino kids, located in a major Nepalese city, confronted by Nepalis at every turn? Furthermore, they work together all day each day in an office with a lot of international colleagues using English? Some of them especially love growing in their Anglophone host world—more than in any other—and some are always trying to use English when relating to Nepalese and Ghosa people.

Let's get serious. If these Filipinos' lived Ghosa life is going to become adequate for

ongoing growth in the Ghosa world, that will not happen by accident. We need to talk earnestly about how they might arrange their total life picture in order to give their Ghosa life a fair chance of not only surviving, but thriving. From the GPA perspective, though, we don't see the challenge as insurmountable by any means.

Let's simplify the challenge a bit. You and I aren't Filipinos, but Anglophones in the same Nepalese city, whose primary host life is supposed to be that of the Nepalese, not of the Ghosa people. We have no interest in either Filipinos (except insofar as they are participants in our Anglophone world) or Ghosa people. Wow! We cut the number of competing lives from four to two. That makes things simple. Or does it? You and I may not have the challenge of four competing lives, but I wouldn't be surprised to find some of the Filipinos spending a larger portion of their waking hours in their primary host life (Ghosa life) than the you and I do in primary host life (Nepalese life). Anglophones seem to have an unusual challenge in this regard, for some reason.

Now at the very opposite extreme from the situations of Filipinos and their four lives, we saw earlier the case of Ed with almost no *home life* going on, and heavy *host life*. His life became almost exclusively host life. No competition there. In fact, Ed's immersion was "languaculture-sized immersion" that was up to the challenge of what needed to happen to grow well for a long time without supercharged activities. Your immersion could be up to the challenge, too. Reread the account of Ed before deciding it is. After rereading it, ask, "Am I up to that?" Maybe those supercharged activities won't look so bad after all.

The dominance of our home life in our host country

Most of us expats abroad, and pre-eminently we Anglophones abroad, but some other groups as well (for example, Koreans and Chinese) are predominantly living our home life in the host country. Our home life has colossal power over us. For example, I've attended host churches where a few Anglophone expats attended. Their intention in attending is that while in church, they live their host life there with the host congregation, but instead, they are overwhelmed by the pull to one another. During the socializing time after the service, they are sucked together as if by a giant magnet, and animatedly throw themselves into living their home life together, while no longer paying much mind to the host people around them who can't understand what they are saying to one another. (*Note: we are not saying the expats should shun each other in such a host setting—but they could meet one another within their host life, using the host language, since they are, after all, in the midst of the host people. It's great when fellow GPs live the host life together among host people.*)

This picture of the expats in church is a microcosm of a bigger reality. Those expats' experience in the host country often involves a huge home-life subculture which eats up more and more of the time that might have gone to their host life. When newcomers from Anglophone countries first arrive, much of their introduction to "the country" is an introduction to this thriving home-world subculture in the host country with its own special home-friendly coping strategies that don't involve embracing host practices, but rather the practices of the expat subculture in the host country.

A person may be viewed as a "seasoned veteran expat" in the context, without participating much at all in host life. Rather, living his home life as an Australian, for example in Tajikistan, with little or no growing participation, he refines those Australian-in-Tajikistan survival skills to an art form. It may include tricks for driving in local traffic, or otherwise getting around, such as knowing what to tell the taxi driver, and ways to avoid being (allegedly) cheated by the driver. It may or may not include some "survival language" "How much?" and

“Take me to Victory Park.” It may also include knowing shops where one can find vanilla extract and cocoa powder in Pakistan, or where to buy whatever other “life essentials” may be hard to come by in the host country, such as napa cabbage for making kimchi, if you are Korean. The seasoned, professional expat non-GP may even find a cook who knows a bit of English, and train him to cook “normal food” (using that vanilla extract or napa cabbage). Special popularity points in the expat community can be scored by thinking up creative tricks for exploiting locally available foods to prepare dishes that are as close as possible to home-life favourites.

Another key skill for cross-cultural living—to be acquired as early as possible—is knowing one’s way to all of one’s fellow expats homes. Another might be knowing which fellow expats to turn to when you have a plumbing problem or need help mailing a parcel, or getting a dress made.

Orientation for newcomers also involves their learning of those local people who are growing participants in our Anglophone world, and who are the special “expats’ locals,” whose ready availability helps to insulate us from broader participation in the host world.

Even years into their lives in the host country, in order to break into some new area of host life, our main resource will be other expats. “Come with me, George. I’ll show you where I get my hair cut,” and off George and I go, without having thought to ask a local friend where *he* gets his hair cut, or asking *him* to accompany me. George is my survival expert.

Another key component of our “cross-cultural adaptation” is hearing “they stories” from seasoned expats and quickly adding our own. A good they story can get a lot of mileage, showing how disorganized, or lacking in initiative, or funny, or whatever, the host people are, hopefully giving us a good guffaw at the expense of (usually quite innocent) host people. After all, it is important to be able to share our frustrations with others, isn’t it? I sometimes join personally in the chorus with my own they stories, but in my stronger moments, I like to imagine that I run from the room, shouting, “Russian is an O.K. kind of people to be! Just as O.K. as being Canadian. Let Russians be Russian, for goodness sake.” (Substitute the people group of your choice). At least, I think those thoughts to myself often!

The cross-cultural expertise I have been describing is for many the key to thriving, rather than just surviving. Thriving, in this scenario, means maximizing home life, whether I am having a little or a lot of involvement in host life.

In the GPA we sometimes call that massive home-life social network that we have in our temporary homeland abroad our “*home-away-from-home* life.” The home-away-from-home world in many overseas cities can be for many, an “archipelago” (a group of islands) in which the islands are individual expat households, and the water in between is the sea of nondescript locals. I recall an occasion when a Canadian, call her “Jill,” went to visit an American, “Betty,” a few kilometers across the city. While Jill was with Betty, two more Americans, “Zoe” and “Mary,” arrived. They also lived a few kilometers from each other and from Jill and Betty, across that sea of local people. Zoe said, “Mary dropped by, and we had an urge to go see you, Betty, and now we get here, and you are here too, Jill. Cool!” This is the common social life of women in their particular company.

Does this dominance of our home life mean we really don’t want to have much host life? I think not. It is simply the path of least resistance. Relating to others like me is comparatively effortless. Relating to host people is far from effortless. So given the chance, my tendency is to be socially lazy!

The home-away-from-home world will also have other institutions to keep expat families busy, such as expat schools, “international” (Anglophone) churches, social events and sports

activities. And even at host events, as in the church services I mentioned, if ever two fellow expats spot one another in a crowd, that giant magnet kicks on. It seems that living our home life in the host world is so rewarding, and our host life has little to offer that can compete.

In addition to our general social life in the expat archipelago, our businesses and NGOs commonly become “Little Americas” (or whatever expat national background may dominate—maybe “Little Korea” or “Little China” in the near future). Here we are, ten thousand miles from home, but we have become the “host people” in our workplace, and the local people are the growing participators in *our* home world, right in their own country. We puzzle over the fact that “it is easier for local people to learn English than for us to learn their language.” The reason is that they are spending a lot of time with us in our world, while we are spending comparatively less time with them in their world. It doesn’t have to be like that. But as long as we are reticent to acknowledge that there is a problem, and that it is solvable, this story will go on.

A new lifestyle to give our host life more of a fighting chance: 100 waking hours

So our first and most practical concern, whether we are in Phase 6 or Phase un-6, is how much time are we giving to our host life? What percentage of your waking week belongs to the host people—lived in their world, not yours? Let’s say we have 100 waking hours per week ($16 \times 7 = 112$). Do we give ten per cent of the 100 hours to our host life? That would be ten hours. In fact, if our workplace is set up as an outpost of our home life, and we have a spouse and children from our home world, and we’re involved in a variety of expat social activities, international school and church, etc., then we often spend less than ten per cent of our time truly in the host world, interacting with host people, using their language rather than ours. For both Phase 6 and Phase un-6, can we set a higher goal than 10% for the amount of our time that goes to our host life?

Now, there are growing participators whose work role automatically involves them in face-to-face interaction with host people all day every day. Some growing participators may live in host communities where neighbours are constantly interacting. *If you already give substantially more of your waking yours to your host life, then you don’t need to read most of what follows. It is for people who have a problem getting enough time for host life.*

There are plenty of cases, however, where both the work role and the living situation are more prone to isolate us in our home life than to immerse us in our host life. So where can we make changes that will keep us in the host world more hours every week?

Finding more time for host people (in their world, that is, not in my world)

Let us be clear: *Having home-away-from-home life in your host country is not only important, but for most of us it is essential.* (You don’t have to hide the vanilla extract and cocoa powder or napa cabbage just because I’m coming to visit you.) We’re not saying your home life shouldn’t take a major portion of your time. You could go to the other extreme to your own detriment, neglecting to find the social and emotional supports you really need from people who are similar to you in languacultural background. It is just that that other extreme doesn’t seem to happen a lot. The extreme we are addressing is the bigger problem—we want to be growing participators, but we devote few of our hundred waking hours per week to our host life. Much about the home-away-from-home world pressures us away from doing so. This is a problem that needs to be confronted, if help is what we want. We’re just suggesting that you snatch a bit of those one hundred waking hours from your home life in order to give your host life a reasonable chance! And note that in the GPA, we don’t find more hours for our host life “*so we can learn*

the language better.” We participate in the host life if and only if—and because—we belong there, and because the host people in my life, or potentially in my life, are more than worth whatever of my time I give them!

It appears to me that many of us first need a change in values, embracing the GPA, and not just some supercharged activities. For example, you could start being offended when you see the expat magnet phenomenon in a host crowd. Refuse to use English with fellow expats who approach you in such a host setting. Talk to them warmly, but only in the host language.

The full Revolution: Growing participation is not about individuals!

The GPA rejects the traditional “cognitivist” understanding of “language learning” as an individual, private, internal development. Rather it is a social process that happens as people engage in relationships, and the relationships change the people in them, which in turn changes the relationships, in complex ways. The core emphasis does often seem to focus on the relationship between members of the host languacultural world and an individual newcomer/growing participator. However, we would like to do away with even that much individualism. Rather than growing-participating individual newcomers, we would like to see the new norm to be

- growing-participating couples
- growing-participating families
- growing-participating teams
- growing-participating offshore businesses
- growing-participating NGOs
- growing-participating international schools
- etc.

This direction is implied in the basic assumptions of the GPA.

Making my workplace into a host community of practice

This is a good place to start: Offshore businesses as growing-participating groups. In Phase 5, we urge GPs to find and join host “communities of practice.” We find it can be a challenge to do so. Yet we so often waste the opportunity nearest at hand: our own workplace, where we spend many hours every week. The basic meaning of “community of practice” is a group of people who are together periodically (whether frequently or occasionally) for some particular purpose. They know who belongs and who does not. Belonging means conforming to the practices—the shared ways of talking and otherwise acting. We feel that growing participators, by Phase 5, and possibly in Phase 4, should belong to such communities of practice or other small host social networks (such as a cluster of friends that accepts us into the cluster as one of them). Until I am part of some communities of practice or social networks, my main model of how to live in the host world is based on individual host people relating to a foreigner (me). But I must grow beyond that level of learning, and be apprenticed into *group life*—not host people relating to a foreigner, but host people relating to one another, largely ignoring my foreignness. The workplace is one of the most commonly lost opportunities for participating heavily in a host community of practice.

We often make our office into a little Anglo world, and the local people who work with us, if there even are any, are the immigrants to my home world in their own country, while the Anglophones are the host people. So how do I make my workplace into a host community of

practice? First and foremost the office language needs to be the host language. If there are no local people working in the office, and all the workers share the same native language, then it will not be possible to make the host language the office language. In such a case, we will hire at least one host person who doesn't know the (former) office language, and at least one additional host person, so that there will be fully normal host-to-host interaction going on in our community of practice. Next, it will be expected that all expats working in the office must be growing participators in the host languacultural world at some level. At that point, by including a local person in the office who doesn't know our (former) office language, we've seriously changed the facts on the ground. *There is now often only one language understood by everyone in the room* (however weakly or strongly) *and that is the local host language*. Therefore, from now on it is clearly *rude* to use any other language than the local host language in the office, since if we use any other language, someone is being shut out entirely from what is being said. It is not at all unrealistic to decide we won't use another language if a host person is in the room who doesn't know that language. Over time, the number of host staff who don't know the former office language may increase.

In general, there should be an effort to conduct life in the office in the host way. Hopefully, some of the expats did some in-depth interviewing regarding life at a host office in Phase 4 (Deep Life Sharing). If not, they should do so now. As they get a better understanding of the nature of host life at the office, they can discuss with their local staff the ways in which their own practices are and are not host-like. And the ambience should be host ambience—pictures, decorations, furniture, furniture arrangements, tools, utensils—can all lead to a sense of locality that encourages the local staff to be their home selves, and thus to show the expat staff how to be their own host selves.

Our place of residence getting some host-life time

This section doesn't exclusively deal with the issue of growing-participating families, though that particular adaptation would make the other adaptations of this section more do-able. We find that children as young as seven (perhaps younger) can do Phase 1 with the family. They may seem to tune out some of the time, but in the end do better than the parents. The requirement of making the activities engaging for a seven-year-old will be a good quality control over effectiveness of the activities for adults as well. Children will probably not need to go beyond Phase 2, and their life with neighbouring children will be like Phase 6 for them! Adolescents will probably benefit from doing a lot of Phase 3.

The workplace is an ideal place to make a huge change, because we spend so many hours per week there. There is another place where we spend even more hours per week: our residence. Many of us spend more time in our own four walls with spouse and children than any other single place. However, we may feel that by isolating our family as much as possible from the host world, we are getting our priorities straight. Well, the host world and the lives we live there may just be of more potential value to our families than we are allowing for. In the name of sheltering our families, we miss out on priceless opportunities for life-enriching adventures for them that won't come again.

This is a good place to point out the advantage that unmarried people have in growing participation. Once a man told me with puzzlement that in twelve weeks in an Arab country he made more progress learning Arabic than he had made subsequently, learning Chinese, during four years in Taiwan. On questioning, I found out that in the Arab country he had been a single guy giving much of his time to his host life, while later, in China, he was married with children. You can work out the rest.

If we follow the path of least resistance, life in our residence is prime home life, with little intrusion of host life. Making changes in our family life may seem to be a more radical than making changes in our work place, which is why I discuss them second. For one thing, there is a common assumption among us expats abroad that we need to maximize our kids' home life, and in other words, minimize their host life. The fact is that it is possible with a reasonable amount of effort to get our children onto the road of growing participation, and to do so in a way that they find pleasant, helpful and motivating. It is less likely that we'll be having a lot of host life going on in our place of residence if it means our kids are shut out from everything that is being said. So the first step to having more host life in our place of residence might be to get our kids solidly on a road of growing participation. If they haven't had the chance yet, the loving thing might be to give them the chance. There might be initial protestations, but soon they will appreciate the difference it is making in their lives to do Phase 1 and some of Phase 2. As with adults, it is important that children move the activities along quickly so that they experience the motivation that results from rapid progress. An hour or two a week won't accomplish much. Five hours a week is more viable.

Then there are two basic ways we can have more host world going on right in the place where we live: 1) host people live with us; 2) we live with host people. In the first case, it may be a student, or someone else in need of free housing. In the second case, it may be someone willing to give up a bedroom (or for us once, a rooftop) for the rental income. In either case, things can be set up so that we have plenty of "home time" where we're relating with our own family members in our home life. But we follow the principle that whenever there is a mix of our family members and one or more host people in the room, our family members speak to one another using the host language, out of simple politeness. (When there are no host people in the room, we are free, of course, to use our home language, and in all probability, will do so.)

Still on the theme of our place of residence, in many countries it is common, perhaps expected, that expats hire local people as gatekeepers, cooks, cleaners, drivers, etc. These are all lives in which we might participate. We've personally been warned that there would be big problems if we mixed business and friendship. (In fact, "friendship" is at once a problematic concept, being what we call a "story making piece" of our home languaculture.) The intention of the advice we were given was that we largely isolate ourselves from our domestic employees, and them from us. Yet on enquiry, we found out that local people who have domestic employees may become quite close to them personally, or remain aloof, as they wish. Both are possible. We didn't follow the warning, and experienced no problem having a highly personal relationship with our cook/cleaner. I know this has been the experience of many expats in many places. In one place we were house sitting for expats, and their cleaning woman came two days a week for half a day. She worked full-time by working for a number of different expats, all of whom (not surprisingly) knew each other. We related to her in our usual manner, and it was a special time for us. She told us that, of all the expats she worked for, we were the first to interact a lot with her. No problem arose from our being "friends" (or whatever we were). By remaining aloof from household help, we squander a great entry into the host life.

If you are in Phase un-6, are you advanced enough for these changes in the office and residence to help? If nothing you hear going on around you means anything, and much of what you see doesn't mean what you think it means, then the impact of such life adjustments may be small. We would say, though, that if you at least finished Phase 3, you should be able to make these adjustments to your workplace and home, although it will be more of a challenge than if you were in Phase 6. If you've completed Phase 4, you should be in great shape for such

adjustments. If you only finished Phase 2, it might be worth your time to do Phase 3 before attempting such changes.

Finally, in many situations one simple change can alter the atmosphere of isolation from the host world: Get a television. It can be a refreshing spray hose, letting host life into our private home-life dominated place of residence. However, many of us choose to use it to reinforce our isolation. We subscribe to cable or satellite TV, and stack our DVD shelves with home-world movies, with not a host movie to be found. (Another of our cross-cultural living skills is swapping home-world movies with our home-world friends, or getting together to watch DVDs and eat popcorn.)

Social life in general

We've just addressed the two biggest spheres where many hours of home life can be grabbed for host life: our workplace and our household. Now beyond that, our opportunities are smaller, but still significant. Another big way to have more host life is through social visiting, either they to us, or we to them. To me, there is some mystery in this. Some expats seem to have host visitors often, such as every evening for an hour or two or even more. Other expats rarely have host guests, even in the very same languaculture. It would be valuable to try to get at the nature of this difference between expats who are from the same home-country background living in the same host country but with strikingly different social lives. That remains for future research. For now, we wonder if our own desires and reactions aren't a major factor. If our "work" or other engagements are more important than people who come to visit, they may soon get the message.

Take a course

Can you sign up to take a course in a subject or skill? Maybe dancing? Maybe first aid, or hygiene? Maybe something related to your job specialty? Or perhaps you can arrange to be present as an auditor in courses of special relevance to you. Of course, I am talking about courses for host people, taught by host people, in which you may be the only foreigner present. That will give you more host life, and doing homework will develop your literacy skills. Of course if you can enroll as a full-time student in a host institution (again, not in a course for foreigners, but one for host people), you'll get lots of host life, not just in the classroom, but in coffee shops and recreational activities, and probably in an ongoing way in "friendships" once the course is finished.

International schools as another lost opportunity we can redeem

We've looked for positive ways to decrease the amount of home life that we live and increase the amount of host life (recognizing that you can't do the latter without the former). There is no way to pay the one without robbing the other! We also need to look seriously at the ways various home-life activities drain away our time. Our Filipino friends among the Ghosa in Nepal probably have their kids in an international (=Anglophone) school. Some international schools may require that parents spend at least a half day per week volunteering in some capacity, during which time they are heavily engaged in home-life socializing. In addition, there are likely to be extra-curricular activities that, for example, keep the "soccer moms" hobnobbing with other "soccer moms" and not with host moms. And our kids are on the phone to their expat friends when not in school, helping one another with homework and planning sleepovers. In spite of the way the international school can require increased participation in home life, and thereby,

less participation in host life, I've yet to hear this acknowledged as a problem, either by parents, or by school personnel.

There is no reason such an international school could not be part of the solution. In fact, an international school could see growing participation as a valuable part of the mandate. All the staff would be growing participators, and concern for the children's growing participation would be seen as an essential educational goal. We believe most international school staff would find this gratifying. Their workplace could always be in part a host community of practice. The programme would be structured in such a way that they would have adequate host life to grow steadily. Children who are growing-participation-challenged would have that need deliberately and specifically addressed.

The strategy could begin by recognizing the challenge of balancing home life and host life, and asking, how can we as a school increase the amount of host life that children and parents live? For example, there could be frequent or lengthy educationally valuable activities that bring expats together with host people who don't know English (and aren't coming in order to learn English!). But growing participation would need to become a value and so far the international schools are not lighthouses for addressing the problem of our excessive home-away-from-home life strangling our host life, perhaps partly because few of the school staff value growing participation in their own lives. Right now the value often seems to be, "To the greatest extent possible, make the children's life as though they lived in America (even if they are Korean or German)." What if it were seen as educationally essential to help overseas children (and principals and teachers) to adjust solidly to the host languaculture?

Team life

The possibility of growing-participating teams is less idealistic than that of growing-participating international schools in that it happens here and there. I'm particularly thinking of the nature of team meetings. A number of NGOs and even businesses employ a group of expats who see themselves as a team, and they may have frequent team meetings. In some cases, the team includes some host people, but even then the team life may not be host life. This is another lost opportunity for fostering host communities of practice. Many teams are multinational, with members varying in their English ability. A team may include Anglophones, Continental Europeans, Latin Americans and East Asians, for example. Since English is commonly the team language (even in cases where there are few or no Anglophones on the team), some of the team members, at least, are in a position of weakness in interaction with any of the native-Anglophones (the de facto "host people" on the international team). In such an international team, it would in general make more sense if the team adopted the host language as the team language. That would mean they are taking their host world seriously, and at the same time, they are not giving a huge power advantage to Anglophones and others with higher levels of English ability. In such a case, even without a single host person in the room, the team would be a host community of practice!

We are not suggesting that if a team is all from the same general languacultural background (say, all Anglophones, all Germans, all Koreans), they should adopt the host language as the team language. I don't think that would work. However, in that case, they might consider changing the make-up of the team. At least for some of its activities, they could include host people who do not know the team language, and always use the host language in activities involving those host people. It's not like they won't still have plenty of home-away-from-home life when with fellow team members, but not carrying on formal team activities.

One common protest I hear is that there will be newcomers on many teams who don't

know enough of the host language to follow what is going on. One team's meetings included sequential interpreters. Some team members were Anglophones who did not know the local language, while others were local people who did not know English. So anything said in the meeting was translated aloud in the other language to everyone in the room. "Communication is primary. What language you communicate in is secondary." The GPA has a different way of looking at the situation. Newcomers are not full participants in any community of practice. I've been in meetings where someone was present who needed interpretation. Some member of the community of practice sat beside them, softly translating whatever was being said by anyone in the meeting. In such a case, the newcomers will see vividly that to be a full participant in this group means doing what the other expats and host people are doing. Growing into the host life is not an option, but a necessity.

How about a broader, growing-participating community of expat sojourners?

Why limit the vision? I have observed many expat/Anglophone-dominated communities of practice. They have many ongoing discourses, mostly relating to the challenges of living the home life in the environment. We hope a day will come when they will be talking as much or more about ways they are struggling and succeeding in living increased host life. May growing participation become a passion among overseas expat communities.

Miscellaneous special issues, relevant to some groups of readers only

These special groups include those who feel that they must be growing participators in the Anglo languaculture as well as in one or more local host languacultures; those who feel they must be growing participators in more than one local host languaculture; those who have only limited access to members of the host group in which they wish to be growing participators and finally, those who feel their host people want them to use English (thus themselves becoming the host people).

The Anglophone host world of non-Anglophone expats abroad

For some reason, many international workers from non-Anglophone countries who have gone abroad from their home countries (Korea, China, Latin America, Continental Europe) to work in other non-Anglophone countries are highly motivated to "learn English" in those countries, and not as highly motivated to grow in the local languacultural world. Typically, it does not appear to involve a conscious choice to learn English at the expense of the host languaculture. Most of these people would say that their primary goal is to grow into the local world, not the Anglophone expat world in that country. Yet the reality is often otherwise. And returning to their home country after their posting abroad, their improved English ability will bring them far more prestige than, say, their Arabic ability. Likewise, they may feel that being in Jordan, or Turkey, or Mongolia is a wonderful opportunity for their children to learn English in the expat community and international school. That decreases the prospects of whole-family growing participation that the GPA encourages. In any case, for many, after their home languaculture, their host life in the Anglophone expat community takes a hefty proportion of their waking hours. I know of a Chinese worker who went to Jordan, and after a few months returned to China and said that he would not return to Jordan unless he could improve his English first. No mention of Arabic. Many people, both Anglo and non-Anglo, assume that Anglo languaculture is always first base, while growing participation in the local host languaculture is second base. English is badly in need of demotion, as it robs other

languacultures of international growing participators, or at best, seriously reduces their growth in those local languacultures. Most workers going to non-Anglophone countries should forget about English! Remember that there are only 100 waking hours in a week, and any time spent living one life is time spent not living the other(s).

The national languaculture as another competing host life

If we return to the Filipino team of growing participators in the Ghosa minority languacultural world in Nepal (what we have to say here applies to all of us in multilingual settings—not just to Filipinos in Nepal), we can't ignore the fact that their national Nepali life is a significant part of their picture, especially in that it is a significant part of the Ghosa people's own life picture, part of what experts call their "linguistic repertoire." There are realms of Ghosa life in which Nepali plays an essential role. At the very least, you will be nurtured into the Nepali life of the Ghosa people by the Ghosa people, if you never stop growing, since that is part of their total life. It will be inevitable at some point, unless you stop growing further into their life. Indeed, on the Phase 6 road, with perhaps seventeen years ahead on the way to "Near Native Proficiency," you haven't been apprenticed very far into that world if you haven't yet been participating in the Ghosa people's Nepali practices. (Please adjust the names of people groups and languacultural worlds to fit your own situation of minority and national languages or whatever.)

Now some of these Filipinos will "for practical reasons" want to "learn some Nepali" before "getting on with Ghosa." In the GPA we have a saying, "You don't choose a language; you choose a people group." Rather than "learning a little Nepali," you would have a season when the focus of your growing participation is the Nepali languacultural world rather than the Ghosa languacultural world—a season for specially loving Nepalis before focusing on specially loving Ghosa people. This strategy might be especially helpful in multilingual situations where even more layers of language are involved, say, French, Wolof and Soninke in Senegal. Nothing wrong with specially loving the French for a season!

So these are the two options for "national language learning" or "lingua franca learning." Either 1) do it as part of the process of being nurtured into the minority languacultural world in which you are a growing participator, or 2) do it as part of a separate season in which you are growing participators in the other people group.

For the sake of their growing participation, though, these Filipinos will want to find whatever network of public services there are (shops, cafes, etc.) that are Ghosa run, since their national Nepali life may constantly overwhelm their Ghosa life. There is little danger of their Filipino/Cebuano life or their global/Anglophone life or their national Nepali life being strangled by their Ghosa life. The challenge is rather to have much Ghosa life at all! If they don't recognize this challenge, then their Ghosa life is probably under serious threat of extinction. Can they give at least 10% (or better, 20%) of those 100 waking hours per week to living their Ghosa life? If they are in Phase un-6, can at least five of those hours be supercharged?

Getting enough host-life time with displaced host groups

There are even more challenging cases than that of Filipinos among Ghosa people. We've seen cases where the growing participators lived hundreds of miles from the homeland of the people group, and had knowledge of few or none of the host people in the city where they lived. When it was only two people, the GPs managed to spend a lot of time with those two people. In the case where there were no host people on a regular basis (the homeland of the host people was involved in an insurgency, so that expats could not live there) from time to time members of that

group came to the city for hospital care. When they came, relatives had to come along to care for them in the hospital. At those times, the growing participator spent many hours with the patients and/or family members, and made a lot of audio recordings, which they listened to with much devotion when there were no host people around. Audio recordings, in the GPA, allow you to relive those experiences you had with host people—over and over—at times when new experiences are not possible, or are less than one might wish.

Interestingly, six of the 50+ participants in Leaver's research on highly advanced language learners had been rated as Level 5 (that is, as "functionally equivalent" to a university educated native speaker). One fascinating observation was that some of these Level 5 people had never lived extensively in the host country, but had instead managed to become amazingly advanced through heavy involvement in the immigrant community in America. If you face an overseas assignment in which early growing participation is likely to be a challenge, here is evidence that it is *possible* to join an overseas host community (diaspora community) in countries where there are many immigrants or immigrant workers, and grow as far as you want before even going to the homeland. But it is not a matter of a "tutor" giving you their language through once-a-week sixty-minute lessons. It is still a matter of significantly modifying your life—not a language to be learned, but a life to be lived.

Should you go this route, then once you have basic interactional/conversational ability (Phase 3), relatively brief visits to the host homeland (perhaps with personal referrals from host immigrants with whom you've become friends in your own country) can be a tremendous shot in the arm, spurring you on. Before you have any conversational ability, this will be less the case.

But they feel insulted if I don't use English!

Now one thing I don't want to do in this guide is to foster guilt feelings unless they are constructive ones. For many years I've heard people talk defensively about the amount of English they use with host people, saying that the host people want it that way. "I mainly relate to educated people, and they feel put down if I don't speak to them in English," or "English is the language of business all over the world, and business people want you to use English with them." I've challenged these claims in my own practices, whenever I encountered them in a situation where I was a growing participator. I've held many a conversation in which the other person persisted for a long time using English with me, and I persisted longer in using their language. And I don't believe I have offended anyone so far. People aren't thinking that much about their language choice. In some cases, it takes awhile before they have a good enough feel for my level of ability that they can adapt their speech to me and switch to using their own language. In other cases, their use of English is a gesture of kindness on their part, which I appreciated.

In the overseas context, I rarely feel that people are using English out of a desire to be part of my languacultural world. That is, it is not about their host identity, as defined earlier. Rather, using English, and improving in English, can significantly raise their prestige among their own people, and is thus about their home identity. (If my conversation partner is an immigrant to Canada, then matters are altogether different, and of course, I love to use English with them, and help nurture them into my world.)

The other side of the coin is that when I use their language, it is because I want to identify with them in their life, and be accepted as a participant in it, and not primarily to raise my status among my fellow expats. Reassessing the issue in this way, rather than the good old, "They want to practice their English and I want to practice their language," has been a great help to me personally. As a conversation goes on, in which I am using the host language, and the host

person is using my language (making me *their* host), I'm now comfortable with the whole situation: let him raise his status in his home world by his use of English, and let me identify with him in my host world and participate in it.

Conclusion: *Not a language to be learned but a life to be lived*

I hope you are convinced that "*It's not a language to be learned, but a life to be lived,*" is not just a bit of eccentric rhetoric, but rather a rock solid fact that we need to embrace if we really want to keep growing.

In this guide, we've tried to help all those who are living their life overseas "after the language learning stage," whether they did little "language learning" or a lot of growing participation. In the latter case, they may be on the Phase 6 road of self-sustaining growth. To stay on it, they need a lifestyle in which much of their time is given to their host life. For those who are not on the Phase 6 road of self-sustaining growth (and hence are in Phase un-6), to really grow demands still hundreds of hours of supercharged activities, but along with that, the same lifestyle as is needed by those in Phase 6. I've painted a picture of overseas workers whose life is so filled with home-life and with Anglo-life growing participation that the intended host life gets too little time to sustain either Phase 6 growth or Phase un-6 growth. I am aware that many don't need all the chiding. They can forgive me, and pass it to someone who does need the chiding! However, people who are growing by leaps and bounds probably wouldn't have felt the need to read this in the first place! If you are in Phase un-6, and so were motivated to look for help by reading this, you too may not need the chiding. If so, I encourage you to explore the guides to earlier phases, and find time for a few hundred hours of supercharged activities, while restructuring your waking hours to include a lot more host life, using strategies we discussed or others. You won't regret it.

*Suggested answers to questions:

p. 3: column 1, "This person is living with me in my home world when" . . . we are using English; column 2, "This person is living with me in my host world when" . . . we are using Japanese.

p. 4 "If a Korean is relating to her Korean husband and Korean children, which life is she living?" They may be living their host life, say, when a host family is visiting them, and they are communicating in host ways with one another as well as with the guests, using the host language. They may be living their home life, say, if they are home as a family and no host people are present, and so they are communicating with one another in their home ways, using their home language.

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