

An Idealized Program ~ Six Phases of Super-Charged Activities

An Idealized Program

To Guide A Growing Participant

Into Deep Involvement Within A Community

Six Phases of Super-Charged Activities

	1. Beginners	2. Beginners	3. Non Beginners	4. Non Beginners	5. Advanced	6. Advanced
	Here-And-Now Phase	Story-Building phase	Shared-Story Phase	Deep-Life-Sharing Phase	Native-To-Native Resource Phase	Self-Sustaining Growth In Community
Hours In Sessions With A Language Helper	first 100 hours (6% of total Language Sessions)	150 more hours (11% of total Language Sessions)	250 more hours (17% of total Language Sessions)	500 more hours (33% of total Language Sessions)	500 more hours (33% of total Language Sessions)	sessions as needed
Approximate Vocabulary Gain	first 750 words	1500 more words	1250 more words	2500 more words	3500 more words	increasing by the thousands
Communities Of Practice	Goals in this Dimension: To become richly integrated into communities of practice ^[1] , the smaller networks of relationships within the larger language community. To develop continuity between times spent in a “super-charged” community of practice (my language sessions), and times spent in other communities of practice which allow me opportunities to develop.					
Understanding Ability	Goals in this Dimension: To understand most of what all people around me are saying. To be someone to whom people will want to talk.					
Talking Ability	Goals in this Dimension: To be able to express my ideas with my own words in culturally and contextually relevant ways. To be someone to whom people will want to listen.					
Grammar and Phonetic Issues	Goals in this Dimension: To become aware of certain aspects of grammatical form first in comprehension. To use this awareness to make my speech become more native-sounding.					
Culture Learning, Pragmatics	Goals in this Dimension: To know the world as much as possible as it is experienced by host people, in able to fully share life with them through language.					

The following pages provide some details and practical suggestions for each dimension of each phase.

Phase One: 'Here-And-Now' Phase

<p>The fuller picture of developing communities of practice</p>	<p>As a language learner, your first and main Community of Practice may be with your 'Primary Nurturer': your language helper or teacher. For some learners, there may also be a host family, some work colleagues, shopkeepers and other service providers, and first friendships. However, only people who are highly committed to interacting with you will be able to contribute a lot to facilitate your growth in language ability at the start. Therefore, it is quite appropriate if the times with the Primary Nurturer are the only intense times you have in a community of practice. As you invest your time and energy in this relationship, and concentrate on using your language sessions to gain the foundational skills, this growth will enable you to participate more widely in the community.</p>
<p>Supercharged participation activities to speed up the development of <i>Understanding ability</i></p>	<p>Use the Here-and-Now principle, focusing on things that are physically present or currently happening. Use TPR (point/learn), to learn your first several hundred basic vocabulary, survival expressions and simple sentence patterns. Include personal photos (both yours and the language helper's) as here-and-now material. Some of the activities will enable you to share personal information (as in the <i>First 100 Hours program</i>, see <i>References</i>).</p>
<p>Supercharged participation activities to speed up the development of <i>Talking ability</i>.</p>	<p>Use information gap and simple role-play activities to get talking underway. Some talking may also take place in connection with personal photos.</p>
<p>Most Relevant Grammar Issues to be aware of</p>	<p>Focus on language related to here-and-now descriptions and instructions. Most verbs will occur in the forms used for describing states or ongoing actions, or in the forms used for giving commands. Don't worry if these don't appear to be the simplest forms. They are still the natural forms and the activities of Phase One will provide heavy exposure to them. There will be many verbs encountered in the form used for ongoing activities (<i>walking, working</i>), some will mainly occur in the form for sudden events (<i>fell, broke</i>), and a few will most naturally first occur in a general, habitual form (He <i>likes</i> ice-cream. He <i>knows</i> English.). However most will commonly occur in only one form other than the command or instruction form during the here-and-now stage. Don't be tempted by emphasizing some other form in general (say the past event form) because it seems "simpler". Other grammatical issues in the here-and-now grammar will include forms for "person and number" (<i>I, we, you</i>, etc.), forms and word order that indicate 'who is doing what to whom', etc. (for example, noun case forms), grammar needed for understanding descriptive phrases (<i>It is big; the red book</i>), expressing spatial relationships (<i>He is behind the chair</i>). Later here-and-now interaction can include expressions of desire (<i>He wants to cross the street</i>), need or obligation (<i>He should go to the hospital</i>), ability (<i>He can't see her</i>). There will also be lots of exposure to question forms, negative forms, simple conjunctions (<i>and, or</i>), etc. Much of the here-and-now grammar relates to relatively concrete meanings (like person and</p>

	<p>number—<i>I, you, we</i>), and may not even strike you as “grammar”. More abstract grammatical meanings (for example, noun case indicating subject, object, location, etc) can be made meaningful through TPR activities.</p> <p>TPR activities that force listeners to make use of grammatical meanings are used in a group of techniques called “input instruction” which allow grammar to be learned (in some sense) in comprehension before being used in production.</p> <p>Other early activities will facilitate grammar learning (in some sense) through “input flooding”—the activity naturally results in a “flood” of some particular grammar form, making that form stand out to you.</p>
Phonetics (continue in later phases as helpful —this topic will not be repeated below)	Emphasize learning to discriminate between similar sounds. For example, someone learning English might have difficulty hearing the difference between “bar” and “ball”. They can respond by pointing to the correct picture (either a “bar” or a “ball”) each time the language helper pronounces one of the two words. This technique can be extended to many similar sounding words. Being able to hear accurately is a prerequisite to being able to pronounce accurately. You should seriously attempt to mimic the language helper’s pronunciation, and language helpers should occasionally focus on correcting pronunciation. If the language has a reasonably “phonetic” writing system, the language helper can dictate words and you can attempt to write them accurately. This activity would probably come late in the Here-and-Now Phase. (There are computer programs that allow you to compare their pronunciation to that of native speakers.)
Culture learning and pragmatics	The objects and actions of early here-and-now activities, including diagrams of a typical neighborhood, typical rural setting, etc., and photos of daily activities, should be drawn from local life. (Note: In the here-and-now stage, this means life where the language helpers and you currently live). Pragmatics (how speech is used to make requests, apologies, promises, warnings, etc. in polite ways) may mainly be reflected in the <i>Lexicarry</i> (see <i>References at end</i>), and Lexicarry-like activities.
Hours Spent In Sessions With Language Helper	first 100 hours (6% of total Language Sessions)
Approximate Vocabulary Gain	first 750 words

Phase Two: Story-Building Phase

The fuller picture of developing communities of practice	During this stage, you can interact fruitfully with native speakers who have a lower level of commitment toward you than in the first phase. You should consider whether this would be a good time to join a rich community of practice by living with a host family. Increasingly, time spent in other regular relationships, such as shopkeepers and neighbours, can become more meaningful. A very simple, highly foreign identity is beginning to emerge in such COPs, while in the primary COP with the Primary
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	Nurturer, your identity is becoming richer, since much more concentrated, and richer participation is taking place.
Supercharged participation activities to Develop the speed up development of Understanding ability	Use picture stories to greatly increase life domains and corresponding vocabulary, including more abstract vocabulary. Begin to process connected stories. The language helper can make a stick-figure “picture story” of her life later in this phase (perhaps after fifty or 100 hours). Series-Method style picture strips and TPR activities (as in the <i>Live Action</i> series.)
Supercharged participation activities to speed the development of Talking ability.	Tell picture stories and use Lexicarry interactively. Later in this phase you can make a picture story of your life and attempt to share some simple personal background stories. Use more complex role-plays of survival situations.
Most Relevant Grammar Issues to be aware of	In general, grammar forms that played a frequent role in comprehension in an earlier phase will play a bigger role in production in the following phase. In the picture story phase, there is a continuation of here-and-now language, as the pages of picture stories are first discussed in terms of the states and activities that are observed in them. What were called “later here-and-now” forms in phase one may become much more frequent now: desire (<i>wants to</i>), need, obligation, ability (<i>should, must, can</i>). Some conditional forms may arise (<i>if...then</i>). Subsequently, the stories are told by the language helper in a simple narrative form. Many verbs that were thus far familiar in primarily in their “ongoing activity” forms (or command forms from TPR) are now heard in their “past event” forms. Simple “anaphoric devices” become more salient (for example, characters may be first referred to by full nouns, perhaps in some special form— <i>a boy</i> — and then subsequently referred to by pronouns— <i>he</i> —or in some circumstances other noun forms— <i>the boy</i>). There may be other complexities, but the stories are so simple at this point, that they may not stand out a lot.
Culture issues and pragmatics	Use role-plays to allow you to focus on polite ways to perform speech acts. Use discussions of the Lexicarry in this way also. When the language helper takes the lead in picture stories, her interpretations of situations and events will commonly reflect her world view. In addition, if possible, simple (or simplified) local stories could be made into picture stories, and Series Method picture strips could be made depicting local activities. This will give you new insights.

[Phase Three: Shared Story Phase](#)

The fuller picture of developing communities of	Trends from phase two will accelerate. Your identity is enriching outside of the primary COP with the Primary Nurturer. In the primary COP, your identity is becoming quite rich. This enables your Nurturer to help you grow in ways that
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practice	can allow a further enrichment of your identity in other COPs.
Supercharged participation activities to Develop the speed up development of Understanding ability	Increasingly begin your Supercharged Participation Sessions by taking an interest in your helper's life. In the more supercharged activities, it is time to move away from dependency on visual support. Listen to stories with which you are familiar – familiar childhood, Biblical stories, plus experiences you have shared with the language helper. Your helper can learn the stories first and then tell them in her own words to you, or read them aloud to you. Host culture stories can be told first in a contact language like English, and then in the new language. This can include more of the your and language helpers' lives. Plots of action cartoons and silent moves can be used. Shared activities can be recounted.
Supercharged participation activities to speed the development of Talking ability.	Conversationally 'massage' the familiar stories with discussions of them ranging further and farther. Increasingly discuss personal daily life and previous experiences, telling first person narratives by negotiating meanings. This stage brings you to the point of being able to effectively carry out ethnographic interviewing.
Reading	This is a good point at which to get serious about beginning to develop some "reading fluency", since familiar stories, once they have been used in their auditory form in language sessions, can provide reasonable quantities of readable material. Such reading can be done as a private activity, reserving time with the language helper for activities that involved listening and creative interaction.
Most Relevant Grammar Issues to be aware of	At each phase, grammatical details that were encountered rarely in earlier phases become more frequent, making them easier to learn. This happens partly because the nature of the language being used changes, and in part because the volume of input increases. Familiar stories will be fuller, more natural stories, and richer discourse grammar will be coming into play, as the stories are now more "textured" (including giving relevant general background information, <i>In those days people use to ...</i> , and placing some activities in the immediate background, <i>He was picking berries when suddenly...</i>) Devices which signal new paragraphs and other divisions in the stories become common (for example, indications of changes in time and place). It will be some time yet before you will be telling richly structured and highly textured stories, but you will start down that path in telling simple stories. During the process of massaging the stories (this is when you discuss the stories with your language helper in order to clarify what you do not understand), you will be hearing a lot more "expository discourse", that is language used for abstract, general explanations and abstract topics.
Culture and pragmatics	Some of the stories used could be local ones that are first made familiar through translation. When you use stories that are familiar to you from your own background, as you listen to the language helper retell the story, and understand it more fully by 'massaging' the recording, you will often hear explanations that reflect the language helper's world-view and interpretations. In the area of pragmatics, the Lexicarry continues to be a good resource. Lexicarry-like strips could be made of local situations. You can tell what you have or would say in certain situations pictured there, and the language helper can provide suggestions.

Phase Four: Deep Life Sharing Phase

<p>The fuller picture of developing communities of practice</p>	<p>People in many contexts of life easily serve as language helpers or ‘nurturers’ whether they know it or not, since they don’t have to have a high level of commitment to you in order to interact with you. Since your ability to negotiate meanings is wide-ranging, and your understanding of local life and needs is growing all the time, you can potentially join new, more demanding communities of practice, such as discussion groups, work environments, special interest clubs, etc. and soon be accepted as a valid participator in the COP, at least with a little persistence. You can take on a rich identity in these COPs and is thus greatly enabled to grow further as a participant. Ethnographic interviewing is also a powerful way to visit various local communities of practice, and to develop deep, mutually empathetic relationships with interviewees. This goes for informal time spent ‘interviewing’ friends and neighbors as well.</p>
<p>Supercharged participation activities to Develop the speed up development of Understanding ability</p>	<p>Use Ethnographic interviewing. Record the interviews, ‘massage’ them, ‘milk them’ for new topics, and conduct interviews on the new topics, etc. At the end of this stage you should have enough cultural understanding and vocabulary and experience processing the language to enable you to productively use native-to native texts.</p>
<p>Supercharged participation activities to speed the development of Talking ability.</p>	<p>Ethnographic interviewing is by nature two-way conversation, as is the ‘massaging’ of interview recordings. Since often the interviewees do the vast majority of the talking, also set aside an hour or two regularly for the you to do a lot of talking, employing other talking activities such as those involving picture stories, Lexicarry, and retelling the familiar stories from the previous stage. Use ‘Hole-Finding’ activities (such as attempting to narrate a silent film) to discover areas of language in which you need more input.</p>
<p>Reading and writing</p>	<p>Any reading material that you can manage can be read privately to increase reading fluency. In this phase or the next (or possibly even earlier) you can begin writing a journal of daily experiences, addressed to a language helper or sympathetic local friend who can provide feedback.</p>
<p>Most Relevant Grammar Issues to be aware of</p>	<p>Exposure to “expository discourse”, including complex explanations and justifications, now becomes massive, therefore moving to center stage. There may not be so many totally new grammar issues, but some of what are considered “advanced grammar forms” will become much more frequent, making them become more learnable.</p>
<p>Culture and pragmatics</p>	<p>Ethnographic interviewing provides an extremely powerful tool for increasingly learning to know the world through local eyes. In the area of pragmatics, discussions of Lexicarry and Lexicarry-like situations can become much more detailed, with many alternative reactions and expressions being discussed. You can also discuss in more detail with the language helpers and other friends the situations in which they were offended or took offense, and how they should have behaved.</p>

Phase Five: Native To Native Phase

The fuller picture of developing communities of practice	Continuing development along the lines discussed for Phase Four. You can become an important participant in COPs such as discussion groups, cliques, workplace groups, etc. Your identity is still “foreign”, but that doesn’t stop them from being able to participate. Rather, it is usually hardly noticed, as you are seen as a full “one of us” within the main COPs.
Supercharged participation activities to Develop the speec up development of Understanding ability	Use native-to native texts as a basis for language sessions: recordings of lively conversations: campfire stories, public speeches, autobiographies, and first person accounts told by natives to natives without foreigners involved in conversation. Easier sources: printed material (if the written language is close to the spoken language) such as fiction; non-fiction on a wide range of themes; magazines, children’s literature, joke-books, plays, textbooks from 1st grade through university level, recordings from radio including plays, recordings of all sorts of TV programs, commercially produced educational and documentary videos, popular movies. Basic techniques include ‘massaging’ such texts, making friends with new vocabulary, filling in lacking cultural background knowledge. In the case of printed materials, the language helper should read them aloud to you, and these readings can be recorded for private re-listening. By the end of this phase you should be able to understand most of what you hear in most contexts.
Supercharged participation activities to speed the development of Talking ability.	‘Massaging’ the native-to-native texts continues to be heavily interactive. The same need continues for sessions in which you do most of the talking – summarizing texts, using discussion questions. Take on special challenges, such as giving a talk or lecture, debating, etc. Use complex role-playing for a ‘Hole-Finding’ activity. Another ‘Hole-Finding’ activity would be to make highly detailed participant observations and then tell the language helper, in full detail, what took place. A powerful ‘Hole-Finding’ activity might involve you making detailed participant observations (“thick descriptions”). These can then be discussed with the language helper, and you should discover much that you are difficult or impossible for her to express without help. There can also be regular time devoted to talking about topics important to the you long-term work, in order for you to steadily increase your ability in those areas.
Reading and writing	Private reading can increasingly be carried out primarily for edification, pleasure or information. Write essays for correction—experiential or on topics of personal or professional interest.
Most Relevant Grammar Issues to be aware of	As the volume of input continues to increase, what used to be “rare” grammar forms become more frequent, again, making them more learnable. This phase should include a healthy amount of exposure to lively interactive conversational discourse on complex topics. The Record for Correction technique can become especially valuable as you are in a position to make your speech sound increasingly native-like.
Culture and pragmatics	In working with native-to-native materials, it will frequently be the case that your inability to understand something is due to a lack of cultural knowledge. Large gaps in cultural knowledge can thus be noticed and filled in during this phase. You can pay special attention to pragmatic issues in native-to-native interactions, as well. Use role-plays of socially challenging situations in which you record yourself for correction,

focussing more on pragmatic issues (especially politeness). See above on the use of participant observation as a “Hole-Finding” activity.

Phase Six: Self-Sustaining Growth In Community

The fuller picture of developing communities of practice	How have your relationships in your COPs been expanding (to more people) or going deeper? In what ways is your identity or role developing? Which potential host language COPs is you still being involved in using your native language? How do you see God working in you and in your COPs?
Supercharged participation activities to speed up development of Understanding ability	Limited language sessions (perhaps one to five hours per week), but self-sustaining growth in healthy communities of practice. Language sessions can use task repetition (talk repeatedly on a particular topic) to increase fluency on topic after topic, and use “Hole-Finding” activities (try to describe a complex picture or tell a story to discover things one has difficulty expressing) and word catching (for example, watch a movie attempting to catch every unknown word). Work-related activities should include teaching or other verbal activities. These can also be “tried out” first “off stage” with a language helper or sympathetic friend. But the main growth now comes through growing into richer and deeper relationships in communities of practice. Supplement by constant exposure to mass media (if such exist) and extensive reading in the new language.
Supercharged participation activities to speed the development of Talking ability.	Possible limited language sessions for supercharged participation, doing “Hole-Finding” activities, and focusing on grammatical form. Primarily self-sustaining growth in healthy communities of practice that have increasingly developed through the previous phases and are now maturing.
Most Relevant Grammar Issues to be aware of	Although there is no longer much time for language sessions, as a life-long learner, you can write compositions for correction and occasionally record yourself speaking for correction.
Culture and pragmatics	As a life-long learner, you can have a cultural counsellor to give you insights into difficult social experiences. Extensive reading of local literature can also contribute to growth in this area.

Glossary Of Key Terms And Acronyms Used Here:

Community of Practice (COP) – native speakers with whom you interact, who are small parts of the wider language community. “Practice” is meant in the sense of “practicing medicine” rather than in the sense of “practicing the piano”.

Comprehension – understanding while listening.

Connected Stories – The stage in language learning when you can express your own ideas not through disconnected words or brief phrases, but through sequences of ideas.

Contact Language – a language other than the host language with which the language helper can communicate with you (perhaps English, or a trade language).

Ethnographic Interviewing – A language learning activity in which you focus on one relationship, asking a native speaker to describe something from her point of view, and thus gaining insight into how the language community views the world and life.

Expository Discourse – language used for abstract, general explanations and abstract topics.

Here-And-Now Principle – especially in the beginning stages of language learning, the language activities focus on things that are physically present or currently happening.

Hole-Finding Activity – A language learning activity used to discover things you have difficulty expressing, thus revealing areas of language in which you need more input. You try to talk about a particular topic, and notice which things you are able to communicate or not. Examples: Choose a task that will challenge and stretch you – watch a silent film with your helper and attempt to narrate it. Trying to describe a complex picture or tell a story. Choose a mini-series (sequence of activities that make up doing a common activity, such as making tea), and try to explain it.

Information Gap Activity – A language learning activity in which a situation is arranged which requires the language learner to elicit information from the language helper. This type of activity can bring the language learner ‘over the bridge’ from being an understander to becoming a speaker. Example: Simplest info gap activity, have a dozen pictures. Person one puts them in a certain order on one page, and Person two, with a second page, has to put his/her pictures in order based on verbal instructions (and no peeking) from Person one.

Input Flooding – A language learning activity which naturally results in a flood of some particular grammar form, making that form stand out to learners.

Input Instruction – A language learning activity, such as [TPR](#), which allows grammar to be learned (in some sense) in comprehension before being used in production, by forcing listeners to make use of grammatical meanings.

Life Domains – areas of life activity: making friends, going shopping, raising children...

Massage – A language learning activity in which you listens to a taping of a previous activity (or a resource created by another native speaker), with the helper, and interrupts the recording to have the helper clarify words, concepts, and dynamics that s/he is observing. Example: Watch a host language video with the helper. Have helper stop and explain everything that you don't understand. Once you identify all the vocab you don't understand, do listen-and-point with that set until familiar with them.

Milk – A language learning activity in which any unknown language discovered during a language session is then used as inspiration for another language activity.

Native-To-Native Texts – any portion of language intended to be communication from one native speaker to another native speaker, whether live (conversation, speech), or recorded (radio, TV) or written (magazine, story).

Negotiate Meanings – something all learners (all people, actually) do as they interact with native speakers, the interchange of clarifying the ideas each speaker wants to communicate to the other.

Nurturer – language helper or teacher

Participant Observations – A language learning activity in which the language learner, as s/he is going about normal life, makes special effort to observe how the people in the host community interact, and then retells an incident to their helper, in great detail.

Pragmatics – how speech is used to make requests, apologies, promises, warnings, etc. in polite ways.

Primary Nurturer – language helper or teacher

Production – speaking the language.

Record For Correction Technique – A method in which the language learner tape-records him/herself for the purposes of detecting holes in their ability to communicate in a native-like way, so that s/he can plan activities in which the language helper can aid him/her in moving forward.

Role-play – A language learning activity in which the language helper and learner act out a real life situation. Example: How to give instructions to a taxi driver.

Series Method – A language learning activity in which a common activity is broken down into steps that cause it to happen, so that you can learn how to express each step in the sequence. Example of how this can be used: You pantomimes to the helper everything s/he needs to be told to do in order to describe how a person brushes their teeth at night. (Or sketch cartoons of the steps) Record the helper talking (not for the sake of memorizing!).

Supercharged Participation Activities – language learning activities which involve you with the culture in a purposeful way.

Survival Expressions – expressions that the average adult needs to learn in order to have basic needs taken care of in the new culture. Example: greetings, asking directions, indicating need for help.

Host Language – the language you are trying to learn

Task Repetition – the language learner talks repeatedly on a particular topic, either with the same host person on different occasions, or with different host people.

TPR, meaning Total Physical Response (or Tune in, Process, Respond) – a language learning technique in which the language helper only uses the host language to give new input, you responds by using their body to indicate whether or not they understand: for example, point to the object that the helper said, do an action that the helper commanded.

Word-Catching Activity – A language learning activity involving listening, which is used to discover things you have difficulty understanding, thus revealing areas of language in which you need more input. You watch and listen, in order to notice what you are not understanding. Examples: Watch a movie attempting to catch every unknown word. Try to read a magazine together and ask about words you don't know.

[1] Communities of Practice are networks of relationships with native speakers, within which I can grow in my language abilities as I take on a unique and gradually enriching identity. They may be made up of one native speaker and myself, or be groups of any size. It takes time to build depth in these communities. Relationships and roles within any community of practice will develop and change over time.