I learned it, but I *knew* that I was a failure because I hated my fieldwork so incredibly much.

> *Berreman [1962: 4] laments the dearth of information on 'the practical problems' of carrying out fieldwork, such that 'the person facing fieldwork for the first time … may suspect ethnographers of having established a conspiracy of silence on these matters… As a result of the rules of the game which kept others from communicating their experience to him, he may feel that his own difficulties of morale and rapport … were unique and perhaps signs of weakness or incompetence. Consequently, these are concealed or minimized.* (Wintrob 1969: 64)

p. 468 Now, I realize that for some people fieldwork really is unproblematic, not to mention fun. In fact, *I* actually enjoyed myself on two subsequent trips to Chalcatongo, in 1985 and 1992. This is not to say that there were no difficult moments, or that every minute was bliss. But on these trips I knew the territory, and, perhaps most importantly, I had company. I now understand that a great deal of what I experienced on that first trip was simply due to being alone under a difficult set of circumstances.

In subsequent years I have done fieldwork with two North American tribes, the Karuk and the Menominee, and have had quite different experiences from that first trip to Chalcatongo. Although I always have (and probably always will have) some difficulty with the awkward social situation that fieldwork imposes, my abilities have steadily improved. I attribute this improvement both to age and to having learned (through bitter experience!) that indeed it *is* important to learn about a culture before one becomes involved with it, even if one really is only interested in how reduplication or plural marking works. I have focused on my negative experiences in this chapter, however, because we need to be reminded that they can happen, and that some students may not be naturals at this undertaking.

> *Research courses and methodological texts only teach students how research ought to go, rather than how it does go in the real world. As social scientists, we have an obligation to share experiences with other researchers in order to develop our research skills and enterprise.* (Easterday et al. 1977: 346)

In anthropology and sociology, it has now become standard to talk about any and all aspects of the fieldwork experience. We need to start doing this in linguistics as well. Obviously there is no way to come up with an exhaustive list of prescriptions for successful fieldwork, since each situation is different—yet there *is* one very simple thing we can do to help our graduate students approach fieldwork more intelligently: we can describe for them a range of possibilities of what they might encounter.

> *Fieldwork itself is unquestionably that aspect of qualitative inquiry in which one can assert the least control. One can be prepared, but that does not necessarily entail formal 'training' of any kind. How one has learned to cope with all the other exigencies to be confronted in the course of everyday life surely has more predictive power for fieldwork success than how many courses one has taken, manuals one has read, or ethnographers one has known.* (Wolcott 1995: 146)

p. 469 Some initial suggestions on things that we should address in training our students for linguistic fieldwork appear, then, below.