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The main body of this paper is made up of abstracts by speakers who took part in the Framework and Language Portfolio SIG Forum concerning the application and possibilities of the CEFR and ELP with an emphasis on can do statements. It is important to be aware that these pedagogical tools and specifically can do statements must be adapted and changed to suit the specific context they serve. These abstracts highlight the possible ways forward for curriculum design, assessment, and general educational reforms in Japan. The paper concludes with a brief note on the possible future directions and publications of the SIG.
本論文はJALT2009におけるフォーラムでの発表をまとめたものである。フォーラムではcan do記述文に着目し、CEFRとELPの日本の文脈における適用可能性について論じられた。これらの教育のための道具は用いられる特定の文脈に合わせて修正がなされる必要があり、論文ではカリキュラムデザインや評価、教育改革における日本で現在行われている利用方法についての発表を要約し、最後には本研究部会の将来の方向性と出版計画について述べる。

Abbreviations

- **CEFR**: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages self-assessment grid uses *I can* descriptors to summarize language proficiency at six levels in relation to five skills. Each level can also be broken down to a series of *can do* statements
- **EAP**: English for Academic Purposes.
- **ELP**: The European Language Portfolio is a document aimed at helping language learners to keep track of their language learning and record their language learning achievements and experiences. An ELP includes Goal-setting and self-assessment checklists (a series of *can do* statements which breaks down each level of the CEFR). The FLP SIG has published the publicly downloadable, bilingual (Japanese-English) Language Portfolio for Japanese University. It follows the format specified for ELPs by the Council of Europe:
  1. A language passport, which summarizes language learning achievement and owner’s self-assessment
  2. A language biography, where intermediate learning goals are set, progress reviewed, and significant language learning and intercultural experiences recorded.
  3. A dossier, which collects samples of language learning achievements.

In recent years there has been a lively discussion in Japan about language learning curriculums and frameworks. The FLP SIG was established at JALT2008 to gather interested individuals to garner ideas, discuss developments, and coordinate efforts about the use of the Council of Europe’s CEFR and ELP and other such frameworks. These can be used in curriculum planning and reform, assessment and other related language-teaching matters. The JALT2009 FLP SIG Forum featured presenters from universities around Japan outlining issues and practices regarding use of the CEFR and ELP. A recurring theme was that educators are not yet fully aware of how to use these resources, particularly *can do* statements, effectively in classes.

**Can do lists in the Ibaraki University Integrated English Program**

**Noriko Nagai**

The Integrated English Program (IEP) is a university-wide general education program. It targets the development of five English language skills: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing. The program was developed to solve the following problems identified in the previous English program:

- Classes with widely different levels of students
- A lack of course sequencing
- No established outcomes for students’ English level

The IEP consists of five sequential levels with outcomes stated as *can do* descriptors; the descriptors are based on the self-assessment grid of the CEFR. Students are streamed into appropriate classes depending on the results of their placement test scores and move through the classes sequentially as in Figure 1.

The goals/outcomes for the five language skills in each level provide a transparent view of the program. However, they were
not concrete enough to design and plan daily class instruction and did not specify 1) the can do objectives for an individual class session or 2) how the five language skills were integrated in that session.

We developed more elaborated can do lists for each level. We first determined the final outcomes for each level and the integration of skills necessary for each outcome. For instance, the ultimate goals for Level 4 are:

- I can make a five-minute oral presentation on topics concerning current issues.
- I can write a 500-word essay on the same topic as the presentation.

We then specified the major tasks and language skills necessary to achieve these outcomes as illustrated below in Figure 2.

**Reading:**
- I can understand the general idea of texts which consist of high-frequency vocabulary on topics or information related to my interest.
- I can skim texts of books and/or web pages on topics related to my interest, and can distinguish necessary information from unnecessary information.

**Writing:**
- I can write an essay of about 500 words on topics related to social issues (the topic of the oral presentation), with more
than three paragraphs, which contains an introductory paragraph, main body paragraph(s), and a concluding paragraph.

Among many different functions of can do lists, two are most critical. The first is for the can do to serve as a tool for teachers as they plan and design daily classes; the second critical function is to serve as a tool for students to monitor their daily learning. For these purposes the current can do lists shown above are not sufficient. We need much more detailed can do lists. In order to make such detailed can do lists, we have to itemize the skills and knowledge necessary to be able to do the tasks. For instance, to achieve one outcome listed in level 4, namely “can understand general idea of texts,” students should know the organization of different types of texts and be able to identify the main point of each paragraph. Likewise, in order to “skim texts of web pages,” students should know the text features of web pages and the functions of headers, tabs, links, and headlines. Furthermore, to “distinguish necessary information from unnecessary information,” students must separate main points from minor supporting details in the text. A more detailed version of the current can do lists for reading may be:

- I can identify text types and different text type features.
- I can identify the main point of each paragraph in an explanatory text.
- I can distinguish a main point from minor details in a paragraph.
- I can draw a chart that indicates the organization of a text.
- I can identify the features of web pages.

With these can do sub-lists for each can do statement, teachers can easily choose teaching materials and language activities. At the same time students can relate class activities and tasks on one hand to the skills and knowledge they need to acquire; as a result it is easier for them to monitor their learning.

The details in can do lists will vary depending on the final outcomes being targeted. However, by having shared can do lists based on CFER, all teachers will have a common ground upon which to discuss the English curriculum and negotiate curriculum development with others. It is ideal to develop a university-wide English program like the IEP. However, because such curriculum development involves negotiations with different types of people in an institution, such as top administrators, curriculum committee members, and teachers of English, it is not easily carried out. If necessary, a teacher may be able to develop his/her own course and implement it alone. If an individual teacher designs his/her own course using can do lists based on CFER, the individual effort will become a collective one because CFER provides a common foundation to unite courses designed by each individual. This is one of the greatest merits of using can do lists as tools for course development.

Using the CEFR and portfolio in university classes: A case study in progress

Yoko Sato

This abstract reports on an ongoing case study of the introduction of the CEFR and the ELP in Japanese university English classes. The aim is to explore 1) if and to what extent these contribute to the development of reflective learning in an EFL context where class hours are limited and 2) what instructional approach can be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of these tools when used with students who have low self-awareness and who are at different levels of English proficiency.

Four classes of approximately 15 to 20 students (n=76) from four different faculties (Business Administration, Intercultural Communication, Law, and Letters) are involved in the study. (It should be noted that not all of these students were present when the questionnaire surveys reported in this abstract were conduct-
Three are compulsory courses for intermediate-level first year students, the main focus of which is on oral communication. The other is an elective course for beginner-level students in all years of study, which aims to review the basics of grammar and the four skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

A slightly modified version of the CEFR self-assessment grid (levels A1 [Breakthrough] - B2 [Vantage]) was first administered at the beginning of the first semester. A Japanese translation by Yosijima and Ohashi (2004) was used except for one class where English is used as the language of instruction. This was followed by a questionnaire in Japanese to find out if the students had any difficulty using the grid. The questionnaire allowed the respondents to indicate as many problems as they experienced. Although most of the 69 students who completed the questionnaire did not report any difficulties, ten commented on problems. Seven of them experienced interpretational problems caused by the general nature of the descriptors (e.g. “The expressions such as ‘simple’ are too vague”, “The criteria for ‘can do’ are not clear”, “I need concrete examples of English expressions needed to perform particular tasks.”) Four indicated the difficulty of self-evaluation (e.g. “It is difficult to evaluate my own ability objectively”, “I’ve never performed many of these tasks, and don’t know if I can actually perform them or not.”) Four were also overwhelmed by the amount of information and long sentences used in the descriptors. Furthermore, individual difference in self-perception and carelessly formed or guessed self-assessments were observed even with students who did not express difficulties. Although the students were provided with an additional instruction to use a question mark when uncertain and/or lacking previous experience of specific tasks, it seems that this instruction was not followed adequately.

The above difficulties and inaccuracies in self-evaluation seem to be mainly due to little experience of self-assessment and communicative tasks, and the lack of understanding of the importance of careful reflection and accurate self-knowledge. In order to enhance the ease and reliability of self-assessment, some modifications were made to the grid and accompanying instructions. These include 1) reducing the information in the grid by concentrating on the skills and levels targeted in specific courses, 2) emphasizing the importance of avoiding guessing and following the instruction to use a question mark when uncertain, and 3) instructing students to tick individual items within each column, since it seemed that several students could perform one but not all of the tasks at the same level. Furthermore, students received training in reflection throughout the semester. This involved 1) explicit instruction on a) the importance of clear and realistic goal setting, accurate self-assessment, and careful monitoring of progress, and b) what constitutes adequate communicative performance, including socio-pragmatic features, and 2) awareness-raising and practice activities using video-recording, peer-evaluation and task-specific Goal-setting and self-assessment checklists adapted from the ELP (see Figure 3 below). These checklists, completed either in class or as homework, can be easily tailored for and linked with individual lessons, and the graded criteria allow students to record their ability and progress in a fine-tuned manner.

At the end of the semester, students completed the revised self-assessment grid and a questionnaire about the usefulness of the reflective tools. Fifty-five out of the 59 respondents found the grid and checklists useful and reported positive impacts on learning. Approximately 70% (n=39) of them felt that these helped them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and this in turn enabled them to set clear learning goals and study plans. In particular, the task-specific checklists seemed crucial in that they allowed the students, many of whom stayed at A1 [Breakthrough] - A2 [Waystage] levels throughout the semester, to see their own progress within these levels, and this in turn led to increased motivation (n=33). In addition, all but two
respondents found video-recording useful because it enabled them to evaluate their own performance more objectively and to notice the inaccuracy of their previous self-perception.

The provisional conclusion emerging from the above is that the combined use of the CEFR grid and task-specific checklists can enhance Japanese university EFL learners’ self-awareness, reflective learning, and motivation, if these tools are adjusted to particular classes and student groups, and if regular learner training is provided.

**Implementation of a Japanese version of the “European Language Portfolio—Junior version”: Implications from the perspective of organizational and educational anthropology**

*Satoshi Atobe, Sachiko Horiguchi and Yuki Imoto*

In April 2006, a 5-year research project jointly financed by the MEXT and Keio University was launched at the Keio Research Center for Foreign Language Education. The research project, as its name “Action Oriented Plurilingual Learning Project” (hereafter the AOP project) suggests, aims to promote an action-oriented, autonomous learning environment for multiple foreign languages. It also aims to promote the continuity and transparency of foreign language education at all levels of the Keio educational system—which consists of one elementary school, three junior high schools, five senior high schools, and ten university departments—and to achieve collaboration among its language teachers. In order to achieve these goals, the AOP project proposes to develop a learning and assessment framework based on the CEFR and adapted for the Keio context.

One of the central, ongoing research initiatives within the AOP project has thus been the development of a Japanese version of the ELP to be distributed to language teachers in the various Keio schools (see O’Dwyer, Imig, Jacob, Nagai, & Naganuma, 2008, pp. 542-543).

This abstract is based on a series of in-depth interviews that were conducted between June and October 2009 to examine the reception and various interpretations of the Japanese version of the ELP among teachers at Keio. Underlying our enquiry is the assumption that examining the socio-cultural context at the individual, institutional and national levels is important for effectively localizing and utilizing ‘foreign’ tools such as the CEFR and ELP. We briefly introduce some of the key issues that emerged from the qualitative research below.

![Figure 3. Sample goal-setting and self-assessment checklist](image_url)
Teachers from elementary up to high school level often expressed interest and concern regarding what happens to their students as they proceed through the Keio system, and felt that the CEFR and ELP would be useful as reference tools for the teacher. One elementary school teacher suggested, for example, that:

it may be helpful if the teacher assesses the students upon graduation (e.g. “You are Level B1”) and prepares a folder with the students’ records (along with ELP); this will result in better communication and linkage between the Keio schools.

Concerning the function of self-assessment, teachers commonly commented on the vagueness of the can do lists. Another elementary school teacher reported that “students seem to feel ‘they can do’ things better than they actually can” (from the perspective of the teacher) and hence that she felt the need for more specificity; whilst a high school teacher suggested that grammatical descriptors should be incorporated to make them more compatible with the activities that are usually carried out in the classroom context.

Some teachers described the “cultural” incompatibility of self-assessment in the Japanese classroom; for example, one high school teacher explained that “students want to be assessed by the teacher. What they like most is when the teacher is able to give a spontaneous answer to solve their questions.” The CEFR and ELP were perceived as “foreign” approaches as well as being closely connected to the “communicative approach”. Such images of the ELP as “foreign” or “new” often led to negative reactions, or the suggestion that “in Japan, we should think of a Japanese way of teaching; not a foreign one”. Concerning the communicative approach, one high school teacher remarked:

I don’t dislike the communicative approach, although using this approach alone is problematic. For me, and other younger generation teachers, we are familiar with it. But the older teachers who are from a literature background have an “allergy” to it.

Another commonly held perception regarding the AOP project’s research initiatives around the CEFR and ELP, was the issue of it being “a threat to autonomy” from the perspective of the individual Keio schools and the teachers within them, who each hold their own views on teaching. The organizational nature of Keio where diversity and autonomy is particularly valued, (ironically) makes it difficult for the AOP project to implement new systems and reforms that encompass the institutional boundaries of schools and faculties. We thus end with the following advice received from one teacher:

If we are supposed to devise a Keio framework, it should be left ambiguous and flexible, so that teachers can add things as they like. A top-down approach can be difficult, and teachers may get more interested if you demonstrate/show models of how, for example, the teacher actually uses ELP in the classroom.

Our enquiry has revealed that whilst tools such as the ELP and CEFR have a potential of answering to teachers’ concern for educational linkage, clear and specific models that are localized to the cultural context of classroom use need to be devised. At the same time, any policy or framework needs to be left ambiguous and flexible to account for teachers’ orientations and hence their autonomy. The development of a Japanese version of the ELP for Keio would thus involve negotiating a balance between ambiguity in terms of its implementation (or method) and specificity in terms of its available content.
Triangulation of can do statements in senior high school

Naoyuki Naganuma

Can do statements (CDS) are becoming widely used by teachers or organizations in their language classrooms or language programs at various universities and senior high schools. Can do statements function as goals of achievement for the individual learners and/or evaluation criteria for their language development. This paper will demonstrate a current attempt to utilize different types of can do statements, including the ones in the ELP, at a former SELHi (Super English Language High Schools) school, Kasumigaoka senior high school (see Figure 4 below).

One type of can do statements is a “CDS for Achievement Check”. A can do framework has been developed based mainly on the syllabus of the Kasumigaoka senior high school. The can do descriptors, described by experienced teachers, reflect their estimation of students’ competence by previous experience. Then can do checklists are developed by selecting representative can do items from the framework. The descriptions of can do statements are modified so as the learners can easily understand them. These in-house can do statements illustrate the goals of achievement in the classroom. The learners can self-assess their progress through the can do checklist.

The can do checklist shows the achievement of the learners in the internal framework but fails to reveal the gaps in competencies of the learners in a wider perspective among whole skill areas, which are naturally not fully covered in the syllabus. The Seisen Academic can do scale (Naganuma & Miyajima, 2006; see O’Dwyer, et al., 2008, for more details) is an example for “CDS for Diagnosis”, which describes the skills commonly taught in the academic language classroom. This can do scale is different from a can do checklist in response format: each can do statement consists of four qualitative descriptors of graded performance instead of an abstract yes/no binary or five-point Likert format. This can do scale works as a diagnostic tool to see the balance of the subskills development of the learners and their current stage of development of each subskill.

In addition to these two types of can do statements, the self-assessment checklists in the ELP are used as “CDS for Standardization”, which is expected to offer a reference of the proficiency levels based on the external, more standardized, framework: the CEFR. The validation and reliability of the internal, in-house, can do checklist should be carefully examined by the external framework. “CDS for Score Interpretation” like TOEIC or STEP (EIKEN) can do lists provides objective goals for the learners, which can be compared with the relevant statements in the internal checklist.
Furthermore, the can do tasks are developed as supplementary tasks and used in the classroom to fill in the gaps of language development found through the triangulation of can do statements described above. The can do tasks function as learning tasks as well as evaluation tasks, which confirm whether the learners have achieved the skills described in the can do statements. Currently additional can do evaluation-learning tasks are under development. They are expected to be connected to each other systematically and construct a module syllabus to support the classroom learning.

**Language Portfolio for Japanese University and future developments**

**Fergus O’Dwyer**

This abstract briefly introduces the Language Portfolio for Japanese University (LP). It goes on to discuss how the LP can be improved and also describes how the LP can be used to efficiently implement the use of can do statements in the classroom. The LP is based on the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CercleS—a confederation of 10 national associations and several associate members from 21 European countries) ELP what was validated in 2002. It follows the format specified for ELPs by the Council of Europe.

The writer noted in the pilot stage of the English-language-only LP that Japanese translations of the instructions in the LP and the checklists would greatly benefit lower-proficiency learners and improve general pedagogy. After steady progress by a project team of content decision makers and translators the bilingual (Japanese-English) LP was made available in April 2009 to download to those who registered at the SIG Moodle <kurse.o-daf.org>. In time it is hoped the LP can be further distributed but we feel that we should require registration on the SIG Moodle. The main reason is that the Moodle is designed to be a space for like-minded educators to discuss and share ideas. A protected version of the LP can be viewed on the SIG website at <sites.google.com/site/flpsig>.

The current version of the LP is a template version; improvements and related developments will be implemented in time. Some of these improvements include: proofread to check and improve initial Japanese translations, complete all checklist translations (currently available only for the lower levels of A1-B1), the LP should be more visual so it would appeal to learners more, and finally the checklists could be changed to reflect the Japanese context more comprehensively. The latter is one that would consume the most thought and time. Furthermore, it is felt that it would be beneficial to make available videos and classroom accounts of instructors using the CEFR and ELP in classes. The purpose would be so that people would have a better feel of how the classroom works. It is also felt that carrying out focused data collection regarding CEFR & LP would be a worthy project.

My pedagogical approach has been developing with further use of the LP. I wrote (O’Dwyer, 2009) that supplementing a task-based curriculum with the LP and CEFR can facilitate setting and achieving quantifiable and authentic language goals. This can be done by expressing the main aim and content of the learning stage through can do statements, and thereafter formulating a goal for the stage. Previously I merely provided can do statements in this goal-setting process. This is insufficient; we need to clearly outline to learners what is involved in relation to a can do statement and learning stage. Pre-stage reflection should clearly define the important skills associated with the learning stage. This definition should then be incorporated into the goal-setting process.

I will give an example of this developing pedagogical process for one learning stage of the “Widgets: A task-based course in practical English” textbook (Benevides & Valvona, 2008) for
A2 level students in Momoyama Gakuin University General English classes. This six-stage textbook involves learner groups simulating being employees in a company as they participate in a variety of connected discussion, interview, market research, and presentation tasks. Stage 3 of the textbook involves groups discussing the pros and cons of several ideas previously brainstormed by peers in Stage 2, deciding on the best one and giving a poster presentation. The stated goal was I can say what I like or dislike, agree or disagree, and make comparisons well (from Spoken Interaction, level A2 checklists). In the goal setting procedure (see Appendix 1) previously I merely stated we would complete stage 3 activities with my group. The elements of the learning stage should be further explained as in Section A of Appendix 1. Furthermore in Section B of Appendix 1 (where learners think about How shall I know whether or not I have achieved my target?) previously learners just mentioned to refer to self, peer and teacher assessment of poster presentation distinct details of what the can do statement and goal involves (e.g., to give relevant, clear, and easy to understand explanations with sufficient explanations and reasoning) should be provided. This approach develops the skill of defining exactly what is necessary when approaching a learning task- this is immensely important when facing language challenges in their future.

The last section of Appendix 1 forms the basis of post-stage reflection. The reflection can be extended by encouraging learners to think about questions such as: How well can I provide explanations and reasoning? How well can I give a presentation? What I am good at? What do I need to improve upon? In this way learners can be encouraged to develop their meta-linguistic knowledge to see how well they can achieve a communicative task and what they need to improve. The use of a performance based assessment rubric (Figure 5) links the information in the goal-setting process to provide focused feedback via teacher, peer and self-assessment of the poster presentation. Overall it is felt these pedagogical practices make the learning process quantifiable and learner-friendly in a positive way.

**Figure 5. Peer, self, and teacher assessment rubric for learner poster presentation task**

**Conclusion and future SIG developments**

To sum up this paper, it is hoped that the practices and in particular specification of the components of can do statements outlined here can achieve the vision outlined by Little (2009), that is the ELP (and by implication the CEFR and can do statements) can help make visible the process and content of L2 learning that is shaped by the principles of learner involvement, learner reflection, and target language use. Falsgraf (2009) promotes tools that put assessment information in the hands of the learners as an important first step in placing value on language proficiency and in helping the wider society interpret and understand that value. It is important to be aware that these pedagogic tools and can do statements must be adapted and changed to suit the specific context they serve. The above issues were the main focus in the discussion at the SIG AGM. Here the idea of creating a volume of papers, tentatively titled “Can do statements in language education in Japan and beyond” (see <tinyurl.com/FLPSIGCandoCall> for more information), arose. This publication has been worked on with 20 or so papers being prepared. All of the above abstracts were rewritten into
full length papers. The purpose of the publication is to outline how practitioners have used can do statements in classes to give specific ideas and resources for educators to bring into their own classrooms. The publication will aim to include electronic resources that readers can use and adapt to their own context. This volume is expected to be published before the JALT2010 conference. The contributors then hope to present the papers and pedagogical tools to a wider audience.

Bio data

Fergus O’Dwyer has taught in various EFL situations in Japan since 2000 and now teaches at Osaka University. His current interests include classroom decision making and negotiation, Dublin and Irish English, the European Language Portfolio, and the pedagogy of introducing World Englishes in the classroom. <fodwyerj@gmail.com>

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Yoko Sato received her PhD from the University of Reading, UK, and now teaches English at Hosei University as an associate professor of the Faculty of Business Administration. Her teaching and research interests include reflective learning and learner autonomy, oral communication problems and communication strategies, and the impact of study abroad on learners’ oral communication ability. <yoko@hosei.ac.jp>

References


Appendix 1

My next language learning target sheet


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language: English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Target</strong>: 学習目標</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Use the Self-assessment grid in the Language Passport and the checklists in the appendix to formulate your next language learning target as precisely as possible)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Stage 3 goal**: "I can say what I like or dislike, agree or disagree, and make comparisons well."

**How much time can I devote each day/week to achieving my target?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 to (7) hours a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When shall I begin?</strong>: いつから始めますか？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When do I plan to finish?</strong>: いつ終わる？</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End of May</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Today-May 16th</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Section A**: How do I intend to achieve my target? 目標達成のためにはどうする予定ですか？

**For example**, can I work alone or do I need to work with other people? 例えば、一人で学習するのか、他の人と一緒に学習するのか？

**Complete stage 3 activities with my group**: Think, discuss and present about the pros and cons of a product providing relevant explanations and arguments - Discuss and decide in groups the best idea from 4 ideas - Disagree politely - Prepare a poster presentation with all relevant information and arguments.

**What learning materials do I need? どのような教材が必要か？**

**Widgets Textbook, Language Portfolio &**

**Section B**: How shall I know whether or not I have achieved my target? 目標に到達したか、あるいはできなかったかをどのように知るか？

**For example**, can I take a test or set and correct a test myself? 例えば、テストを作成できるか、自分でテストを作成できるか？

**Refer to self-peer-teacher assessment of poster presentation and also think about the group discussions.**

**If I have achieved this goal I can**: Give relevant, clear, and easy to understand explanations with sufficient explanations and reasoning.

**Review of learning progress on or near your target date**: 学習過程や近目的目標日のあり取り

**Have I achieved my target?** In working toward my target have I learnt anything new about (i) the target language (ii) language learning? What am I going to do with what I have learned? 目標を達成したか？目標に向かって学習したか？目標に向かってどう進めるか？

To be completed after the stage, an example comment from a learner: I could not disagree or give good reasons in Stage 2. I learned to disagree politely and give clear reasons much more effectively in Stage 3. I should remember to use some of the suggested forms to politely disagree (e.g. Yes but what about...) and to give reasons (e.g. I think --- because ---).