

The 2026 Japan Association of Media English Studies

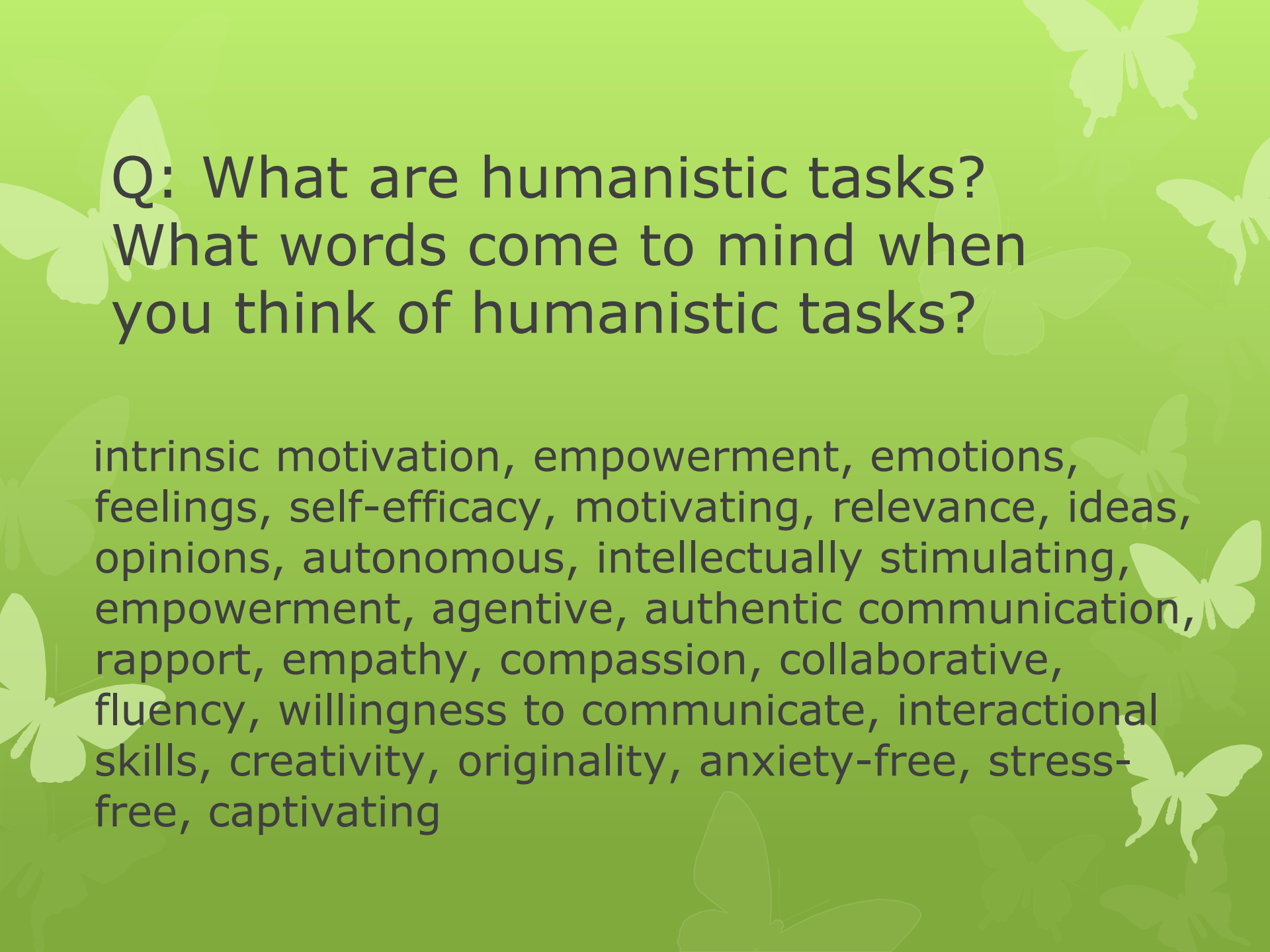
October 11th, 2026 at Osaka Electro-Communication University

Generating Students' Personal and Affective Involvement and Improving Students' Interactional Skills by Developing and Using Humanistic Tasks

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Overview of the Session

1. Definition of humanistic tasks
2. Literature Review: Effects of humanistic tasks
3. Target learners
4. Humanistic Task 1: Issue log task
5. Humanistic Task 2: TV News production task
6. Humanistic Task 3: Problem-solving task and pair discussion
7. Additional Humanistic Tasks
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 - b. Humanistic Task 5: Coursebook writing
 - c. Humanistic Task 6: Adapting or revising coursebook passages and tasks
8. Conclusion
9. Final word
10. References



Q: What are humanistic tasks?
What words come to mind when
you think of humanistic tasks?

intrinsic motivation, empowerment, emotions,
feelings, self-efficacy, motivating, relevance, ideas,
opinions, autonomous, intellectually stimulating,
empowerment, agentive, authentic communication,
rapport, empathy, compassion, collaborative,
fluency, willingness to communicate, interactional
skills, creativity, originality, anxiety-free, stress-
free, captivating

1. Humanistic tasks are...

meaningful language-learning task that **engage** learners as whole persons by **encouraging** them to **draw on their personal experiences, feelings, interests, values, and perspectives** while using the target language to **communicate, interact, and construct meaning with others.**

2. Literature Review

Learners need to experience enjoyment, achievable challenge, and intrinsic interest for them to immerse themselves in language learning and use with ease and confidence (Tomlinson, 2023).

L2 literature (e.g., Onoda, 2022; Tomlinson, 2023) shows that

when finely tuned to learners' proficiency and intellectual and motivational levels, intensive use of humanistic teaching materials leads to beneficial L2 learning environments because they allow learners to **experience intrinsic motivation, instigate and sustain autonomous learning behaviors, heighten willingness to communicate (Onoda, 2012; Yashima, 2002), and improve L2 interactional skills and self-efficacy (Onoda, 2012).**

Newton and Nation (2023) advocate the adoption of **the “Four Strands of Teaching” approach to L2 teaching**, which **consists of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, fluency development, and language-focused learning activities**, with the first three activities using interesting and familiar materials with 98% to 100% of the vocabulary already known to the learners. This will stimulate learners’ interest and motivation, help them feel relaxed, and increase their enjoyment, all of which are critical factors in L2 learning.

Brain science literature confirms the profound impacts of humanistic tasks on L2 learning. It shows that **information about emotionally arousing events** (i.e., affect-loaded events such as being surprised, interested, or touched) is likely to store strongly in the frontal lobe and **enables humans to recall the information more vividly and with greater confidence than non-emotional events** (Wada, 2026).

3. Target Learners

I have created and used the following **three humanistic tasks that cater to:**

a. 2nd-year English majors in the Media English course at Kanda University of International Studies

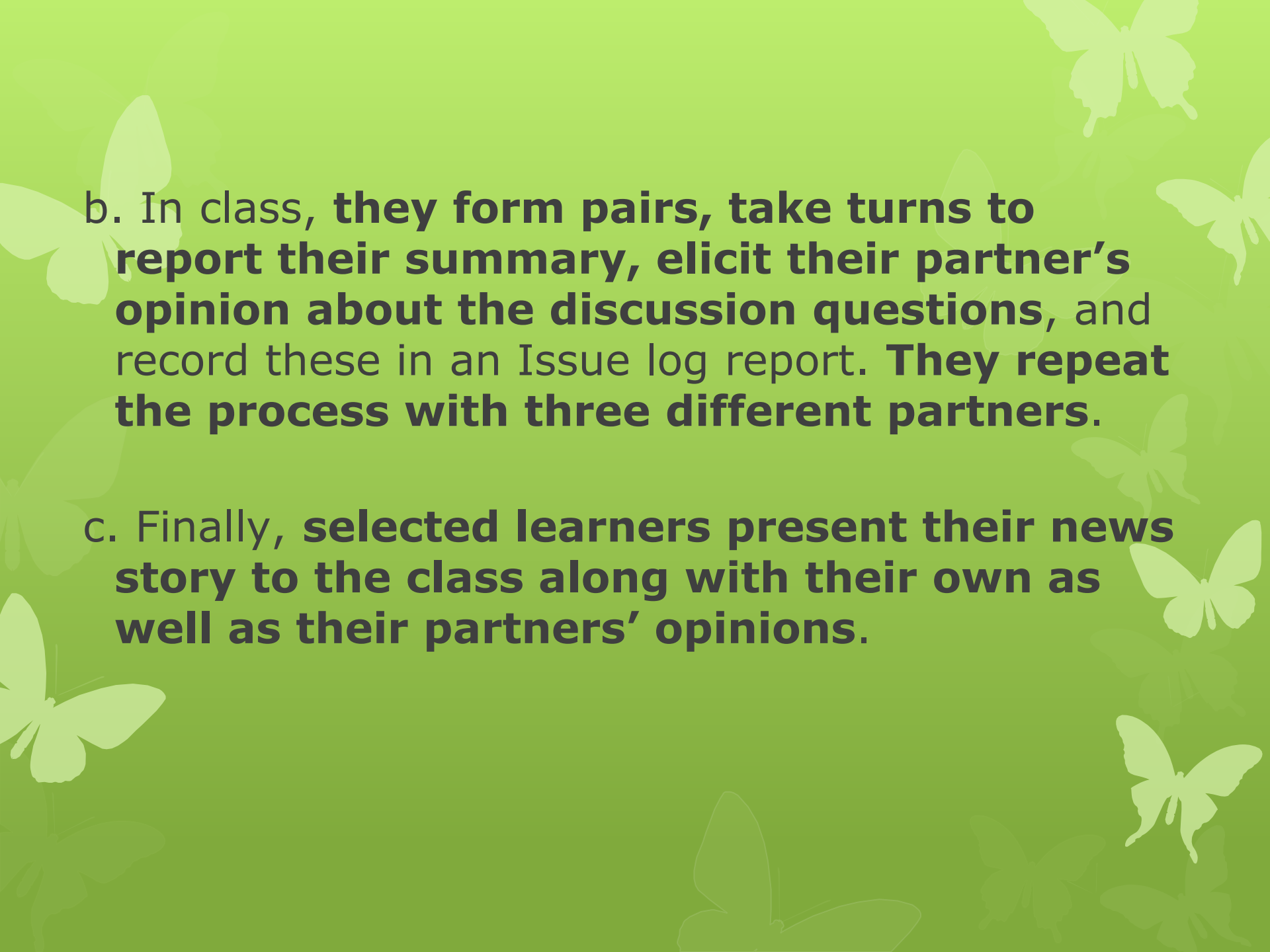
b. 3rd- and 4th-year English majors in the English for Liberal Arts course at KUIS

c. 1st- and 2nd-year students in the School of Global Japanese Studies, Meiji University.

4. Humanistic Task 1: Issue Log task

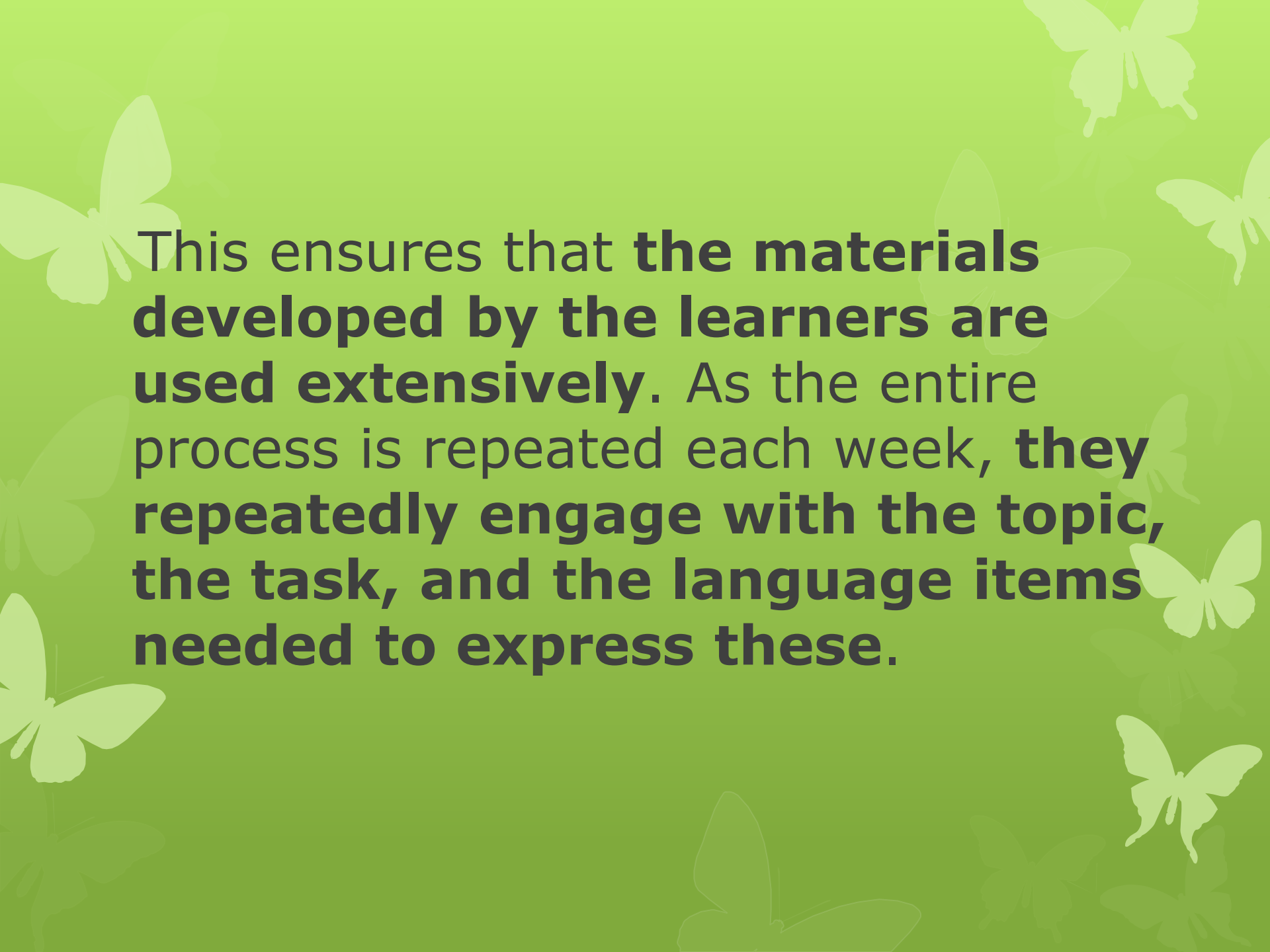
Issue log tasks can be categorized **as fluency development** under Nation's *four stands of teaching*. In these activities, learners focus on topics they are interested in using language items they already know, in the following sequence:

- a. **Learners individually select a topic that suits their interests, look for a news article on that topic, and prepare a summary, discussion questions, and a statement of their opinion on the issues the article raises.**



b. In class, **they form pairs, take turns to report their summary, elicit their partner's opinion about the discussion questions,** and record these in an Issue log report. **They repeat the process with three different partners.**

c. Finally, **selected learners present their news story to the class along with their own as well as their partners' opinions.**

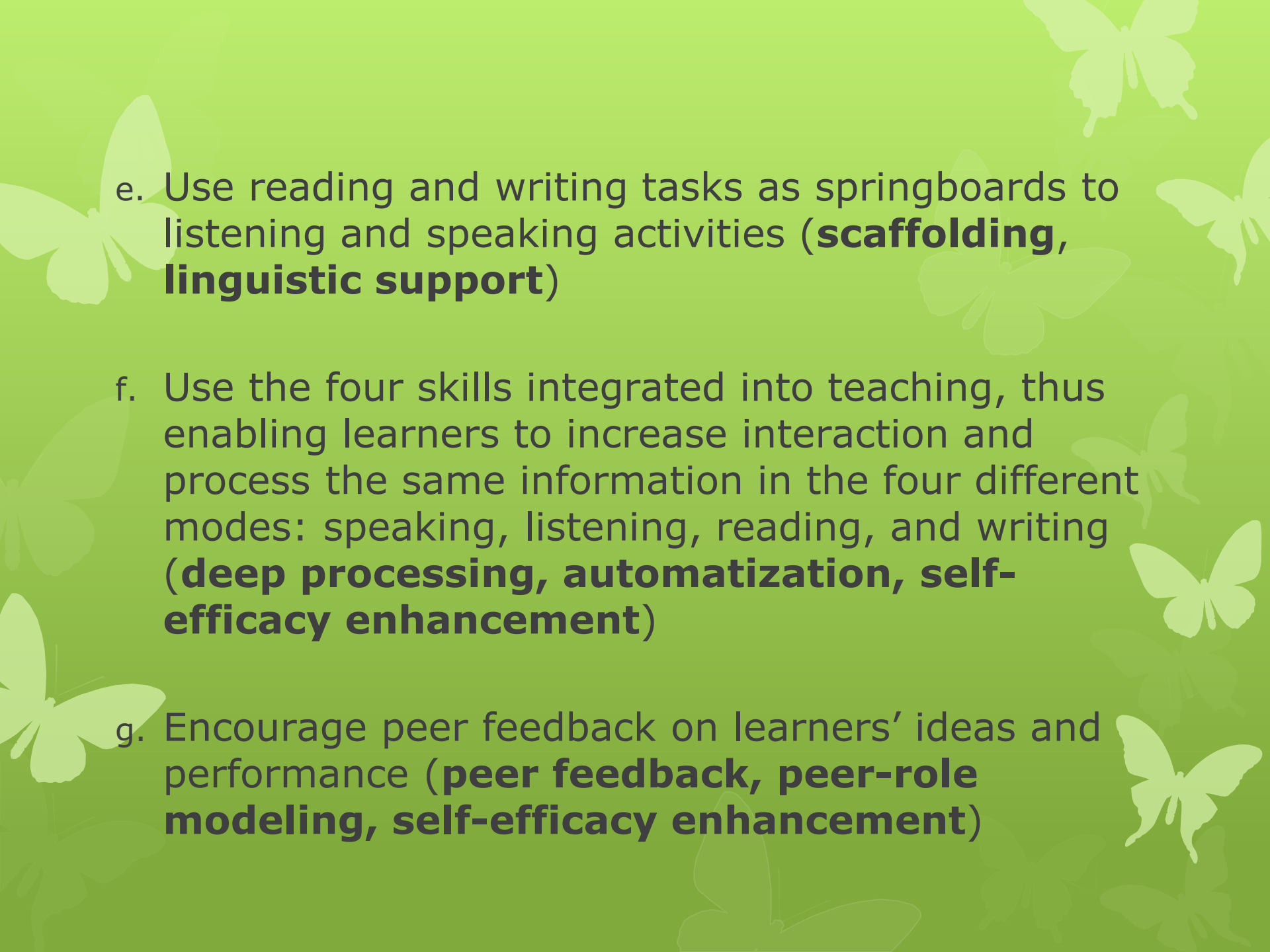


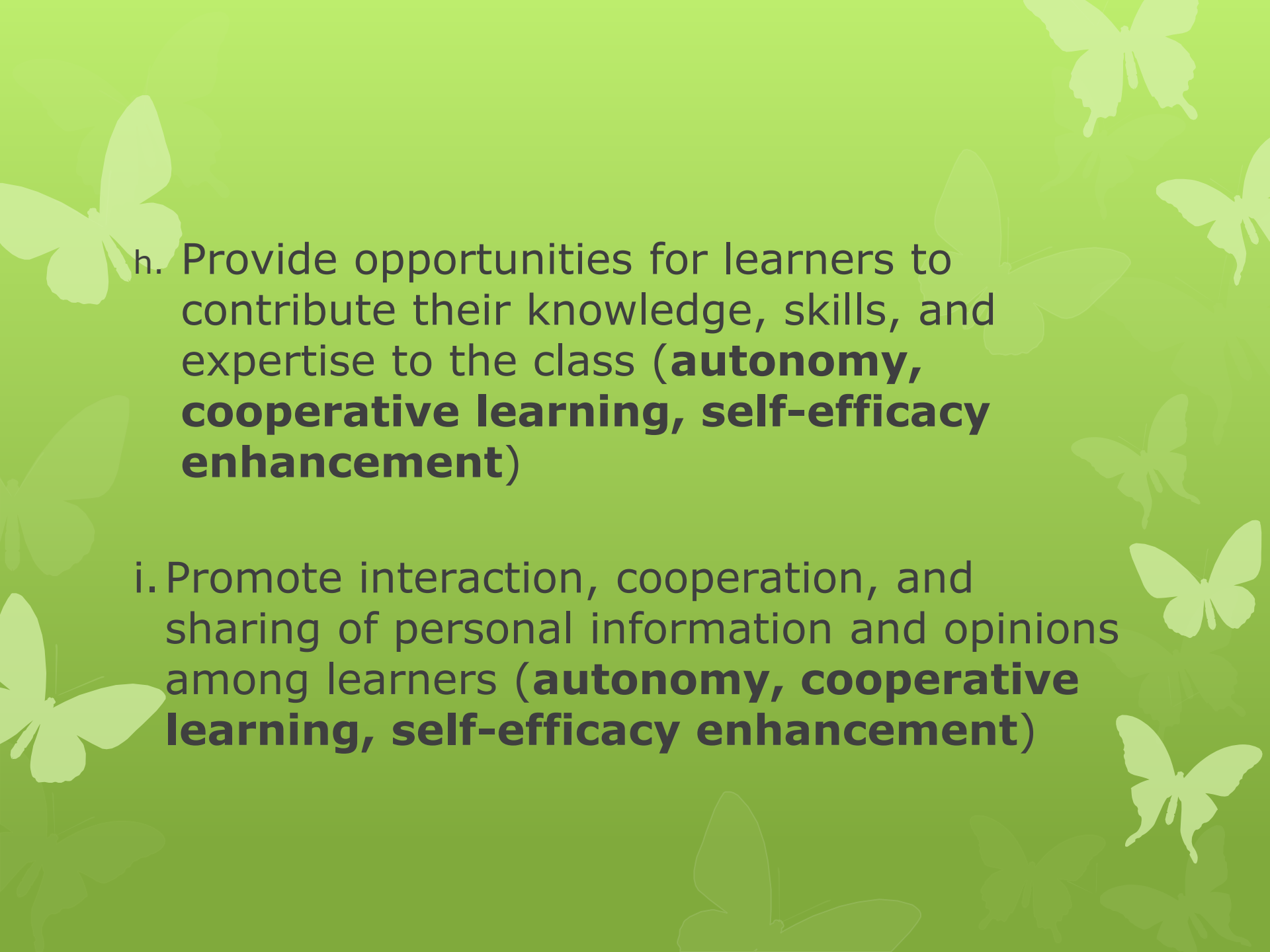
This ensures that **the materials developed by the learners are used extensively**. As the entire process is repeated each week, **they repeatedly engage with the topic, the task, and the language items needed to express these**.

Issue Log Task Benefits as Reported by Students

Issue log tasks are effective because they:

- a. Relate materials, activities, and subject matter to learners' experience, interests, and knowledge (**intrinsic motivation** and **intellectual curiosity**)
- b. Facilitate positive relationships among learners and decrease the anxiety entailed in language learning (**effective cooperative learning**)
- c. Use meaning-focused output tasks such as story-retelling (**easiness, linguistic adjustment**)
- d. Use fluency development tasks such as a repeated story-telling activities (**easiness, linguistic adjustment**)

- 
- e. Use reading and writing tasks as springboards to listening and speaking activities (**scaffolding, linguistic support**)
 - f. Use the four skills integrated into teaching, thus enabling learners to increase interaction and process the same information in the four different modes: speaking, listening, reading, and writing (**deep processing, automatization, self-efficacy enhancement**)
 - g. Encourage peer feedback on learners' ideas and performance (**peer feedback, peer-role modeling, self-efficacy enhancement**)

- 
- h. Provide opportunities for learners to contribute their knowledge, skills, and expertise to the class (**autonomy, cooperative learning, self-efficacy enhancement**)
 - i. Promote interaction, cooperation, and sharing of personal information and opinions among learners (**autonomy, cooperative learning, self-efficacy enhancement**)

5. Humanistic Task 2: TV News Production Task

**Media English course for 2nd-year
students at KUIS.**

Step 1: In this project, pairs of students

1. Select a social issue of their interest
2. Prepare interview questions
3. Gather information by interviewing people inside and outside the university in English.
4. Summarize the information; and
5. Report their major findings in a TV news format.

Step 2: Students

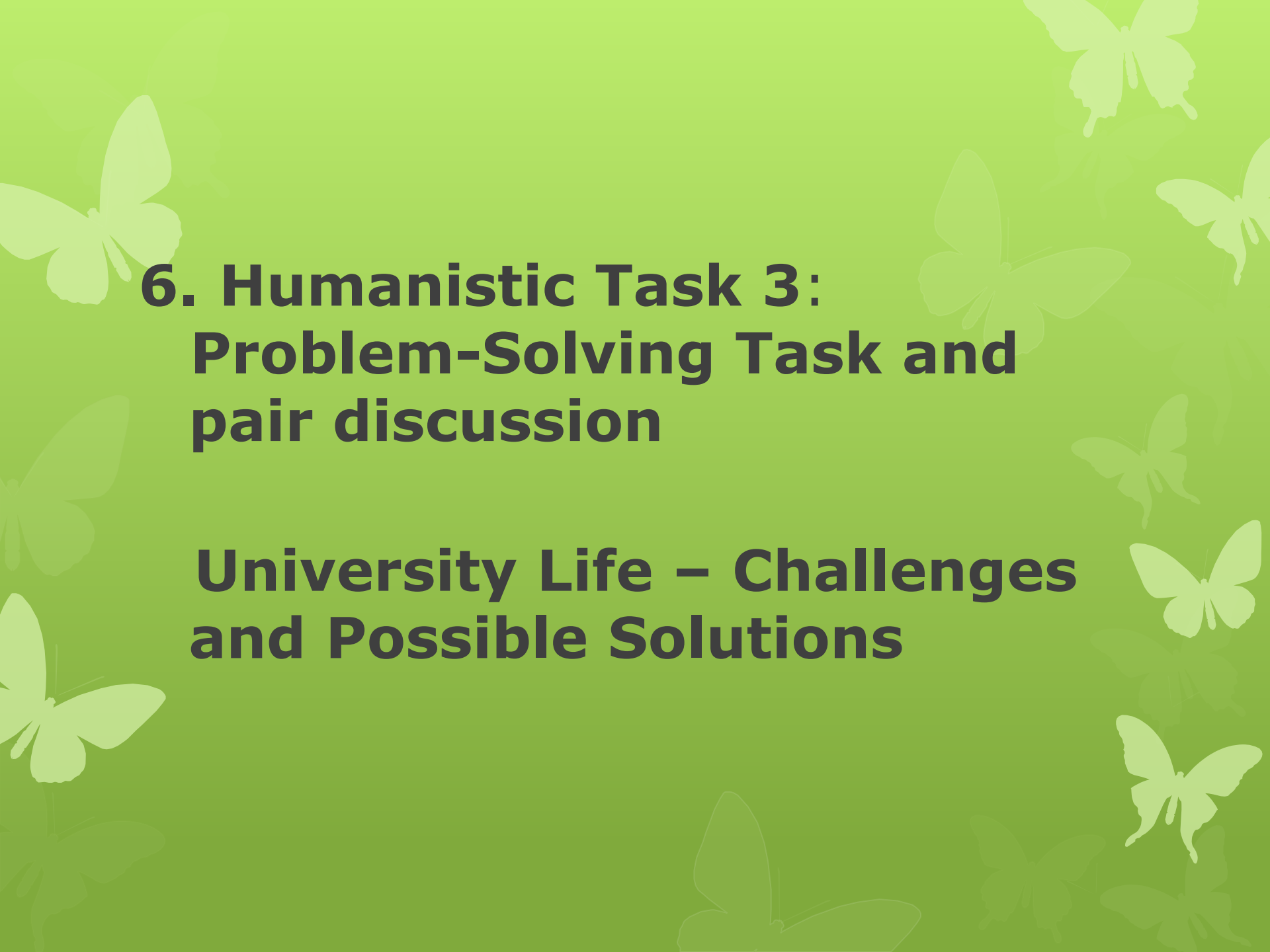
1. Prepare script of TV news show
2. Have a Media Education Center staff member review their video performance, with one student acting as anchorperson and the other as reporter
3. Edit the video on a computer or tablet or in the Cloud; and
4. Show the video along with their Introduction and Comments in class on the last day of the course.

- The pair presentation is intended to **serve as the culmination of their Media English learning throughout the course.**
- It gives them an opportunity to **integrate and demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have developed over the semester.**
- The purpose of this assignment is not simply to produce a polished report but to **develop the learners' critical thinking, research, and academic writing skills.**
- Their performance on this component accounts for 30% of the final grade.

TV News Clip Production Task: Benefits

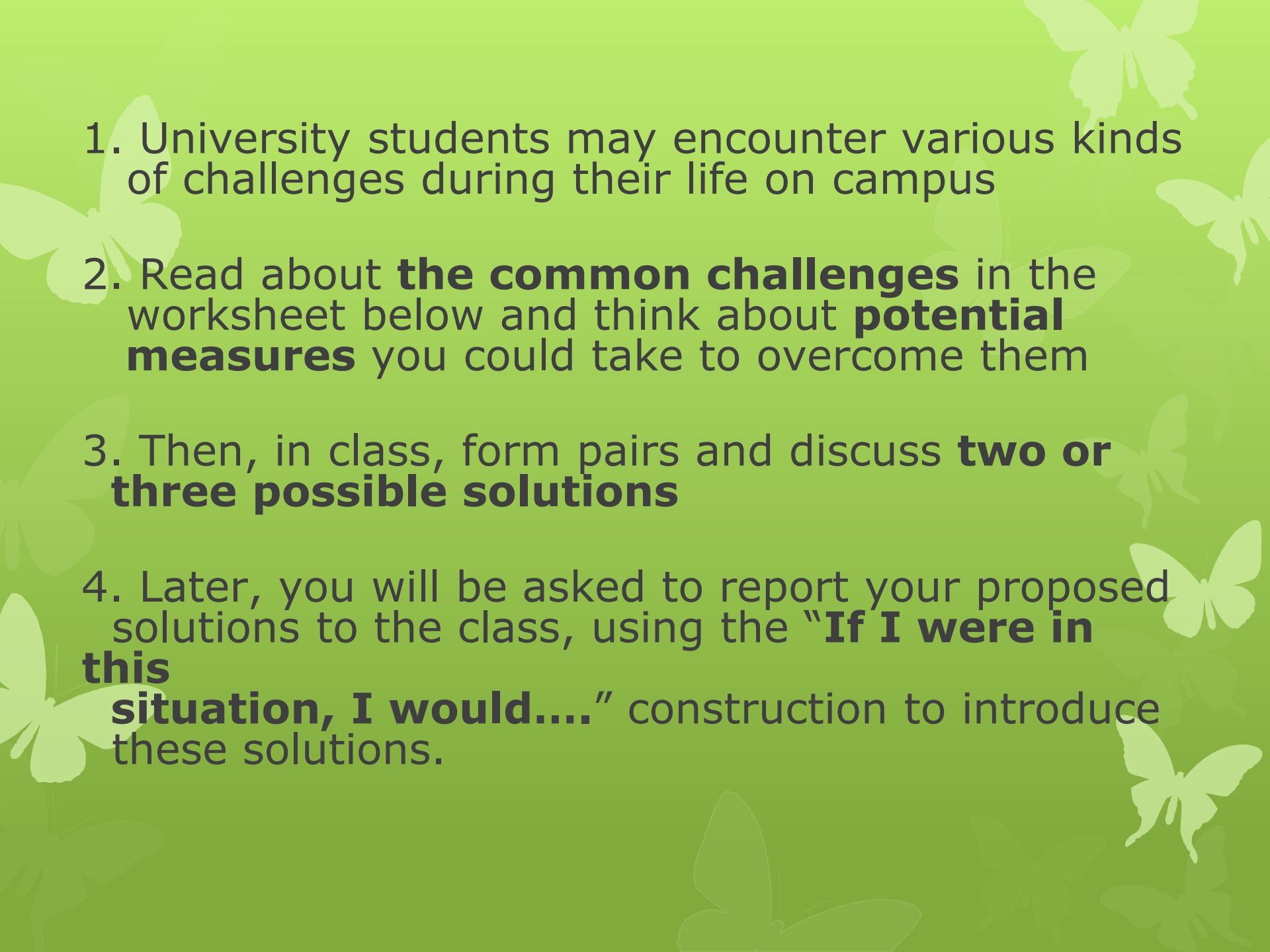
The task:

- 1. Facilitates analytical critical thinking**
- 2. Provides opportunities to engage in authentic language use**
- 3. Improves interview, discussion and presentation skills**
- 4. Exploits intrinsic motivation;**
- 5. Improves willingness to communicate;**
- 6. Facilitates autonomous learning;**
- 7. Generates a sense of achievement, self-efficacy, and ownership of learning**



6. Humanistic Task 3: Problem-Solving Task and pair discussion

University Life – Challenges and Possible Solutions

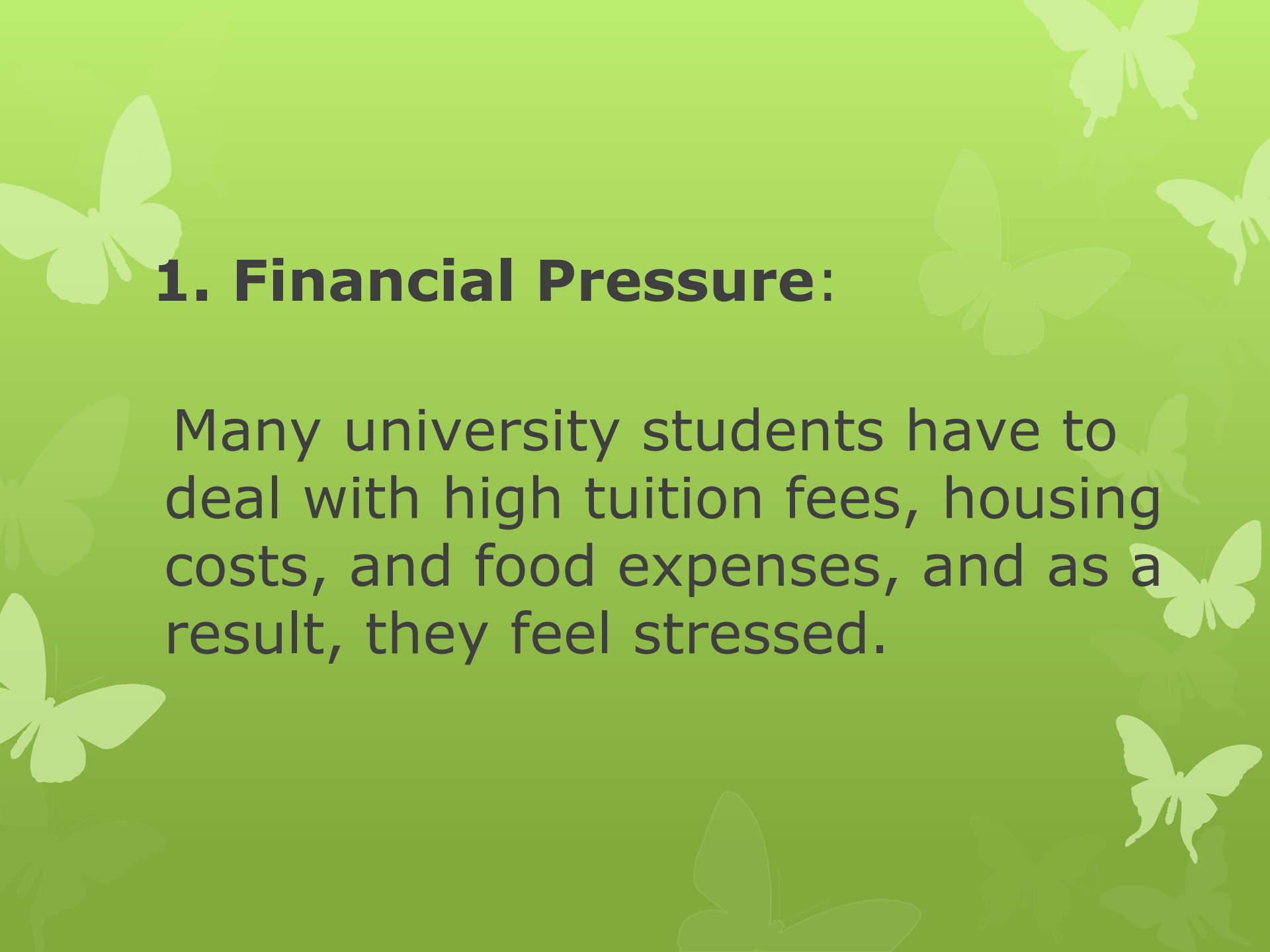


1. University students may encounter various kinds of challenges during their life on campus

2. Read about **the common challenges** in the worksheet below and think about **potential measures** you could take to overcome them

3. Then, in class, form pairs and discuss **two or three possible solutions**

4. Later, you will be asked to report your proposed solutions to the class, using the "**If I were in this situation, I would....**" construction to introduce these solutions.



1. Financial Pressure:

Many university students have to deal with high tuition fees, housing costs, and food expenses, and as a result, they feel stressed.

Potential Solutions:

If I were in this situation, I would use an app to manage my expenses and make both ends meet by identifying expenses I can minimize and find a part-time job that does not require a lot of time and energy. **I would** visit and talk to university financial aid advisors to identify potential scholarships or grants.

2. Job Hunting:

It is often reported that job hunting, one of the major events in life, can be very stressful for university students because they have to attend job interviews and may be placed in situations where they are rejected by target companies. In the end, they may lose confidence in their abilities, skills, and personality and feel depressed and stressed.

Potential Solutions:

If I were in this situation, I would talk to my university friends who may share the same problems and have consultations with teachers and career center advisors for suggestions of effective techniques that can be used for successful job interviews



I would use apps like Bizreach Campus, which help you find young graduates who now work for a company in a job of the kind I hope to land.

I **would** visit these apps and ask for their help and suggestions to check whether I am cut out for the companies I am applying to.

Learners' engagement

Now watch the video to understand how actively learners were engaged in the activity.

Pair Problem-Solving Presentation
video: 1:00 – 2:00 & 15:50 – 18:00

7. Additional Humanistic Tasks

- 1. Real-life content and pair discussions**
- 2. Humanistic coursebook writing**
- 3. Adapting or revising coursebook passages and tasks**

1. Real-life Content and Pair Discussion

Many teachers anecdotally agree that discussion tasks often fail, in part because of learners' lack of perception of task value, which does not facilitate active interactions.

To engage learners in interacting with one another using authentic English, it is crucial to **design and implement discussion tasks relevant to their daily lives.**

For example, learning about **jobs vulnerable to AI** is an urgent issue for students, who will soon begin job-hunting, making this a highly engaging and motivating topic likely to generate active interactions among learners, as follows:

Step 1

What jobs do you think will probably be replaced by AI in the future? Choose two jobs that will probably be replaced and two jobs that will probably not be replaced. Exchange your ideas with your partner. Remember to give reasons for your choices, and be sure to use at least two of the following phrases: *can (will) be replaced by, can't (won't) be replaced by, will be vulnerable to, won't be vulnerable to.*

Below are some of the jobs that may (or may not) be vulnerable to AI in the future. Feel free to talk about other jobs not listed below. Model your discussion on the sample dialogue below, and explain your reasons in detail.

- 
1. doctors 2. security guards 3. taxi drivers
4. shop clerks 5. delivery staff 6. teachers
7. doctors 8. nurses 9. lawyers
10. counselors 11. drivers 12. journalists
13. computer programmers 14. translators 15. interpreters
16. travel agents 17. professors 18. TV announcers
19. customer support staff 20. cashiers 21. waiters
22. politicians 23. professional athletes 24. accountants
25. day traders 26. actors 27. musicians

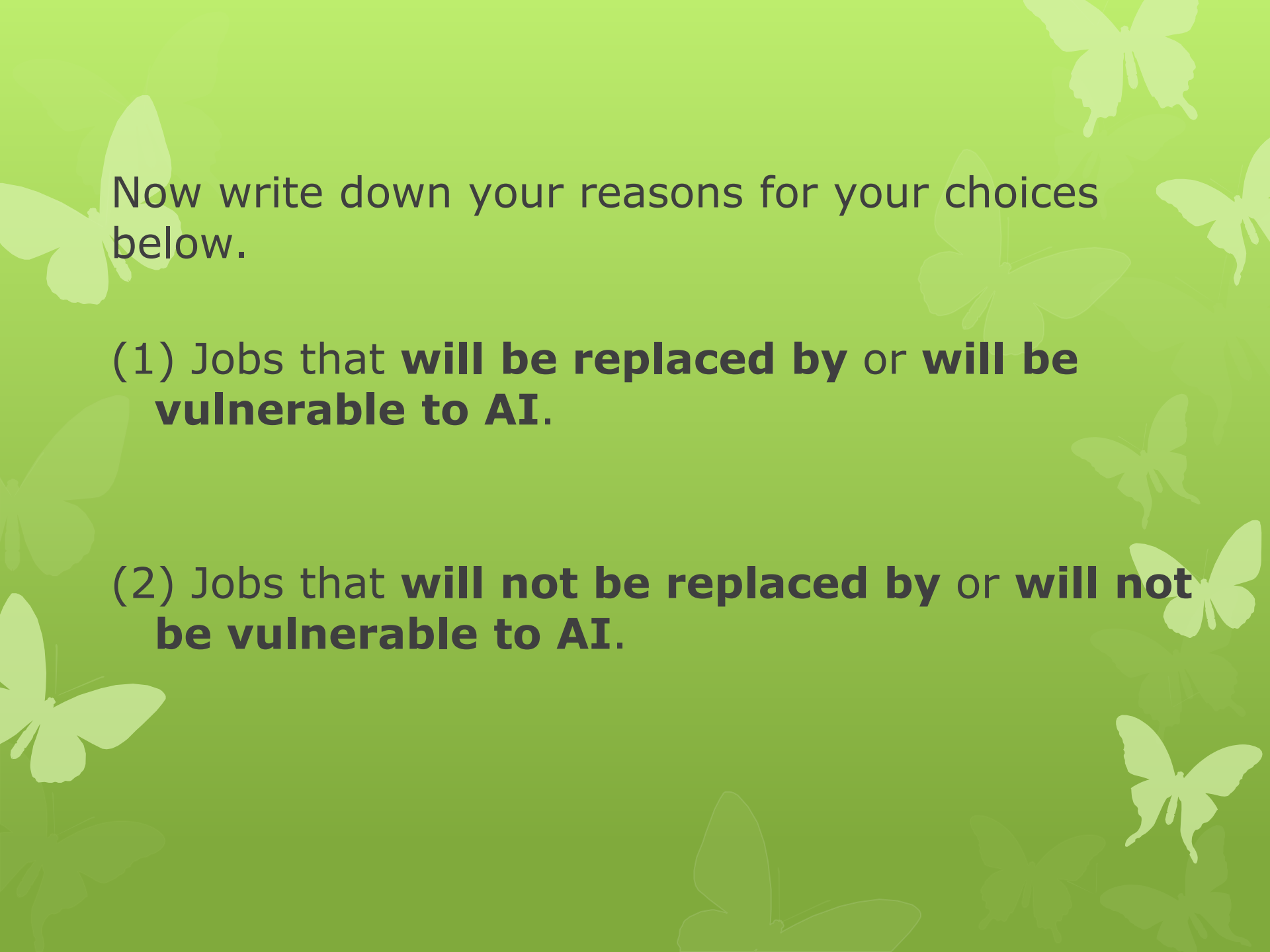
Sample Dialogue

Shota

I think travel agents **can be replaced by** AI. Nowadays AI can consider customers' requests for travel destinations, experiences, and expenses and present the most suitable plan for them. Many people do not feel the need to consult with a travel agency, except perhaps older people who wish to select a package tour with a guide. But nurses and doctors **can't be replaced by** AI. One of their jobs is to create a good relationship with patients and to communicate with them, ultimately giving them hope for living peacefully. When I was in hospital, I was cheered up by a doctor and nurses, and I'm sure the positive thinking generated by my interactions with them helped me recover from the illness. I don't think AI could do such a caring job. How about you, Kenta?

Kenta

Well, I hope teachers **won't be vulnerable to** AI because their job includes not only teaching a particular subject like English but also creating a lively, vibrant learning environment and communicating with students on a personal level. On the other hand, translators and interpreters **will be vulnerable to** AI because AI-based websites such as ChatGPT and DeepL have already become highly sophisticated and can translate one language into another with a high degree of precision.



Now write down your reasons for your choices below.

(1) Jobs that **will be replaced by** or **will be vulnerable to AI.**

(2) Jobs that **will not be replaced by** or **will not be vulnerable to AI.**

Step 2

Now look at the research conducted by Microsoft on jobs vulnerable to AI in the United States in the near future (<https://www.investopedia.com/microsoft-study-identifies-jobs-vulnerable-to-ai-is-your-position-secure-11781758>).

Similarly, read the following online news article on jobs ChatGPT predicts will lead to widespread unemployment in four years in Japan (<https://www.dailyshincho.jp/article/2026/03030501/?al=1>).

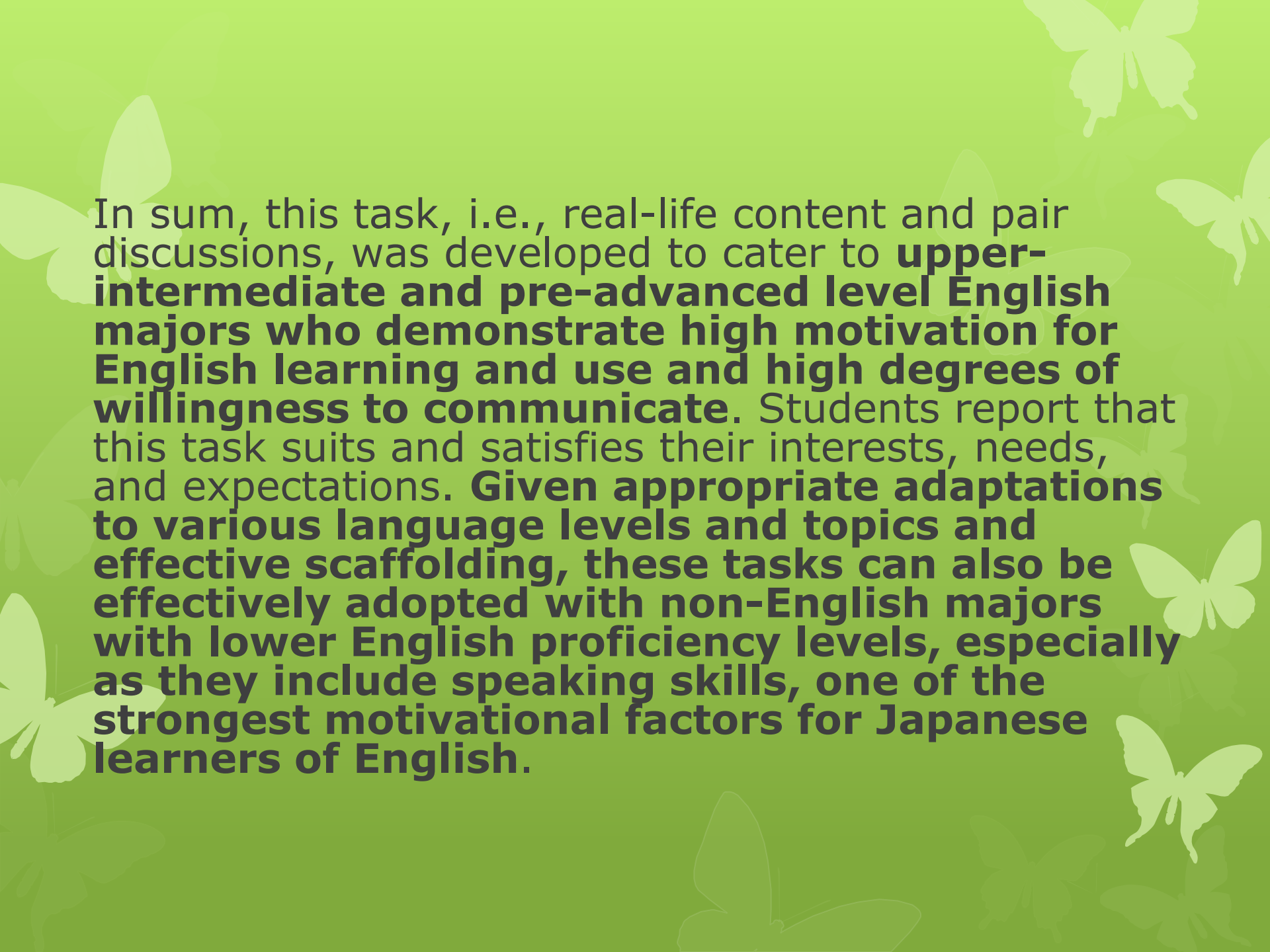
What do you think of these predictions? Do you think they are convincing? Form pairs and talk about which jobs are convincingly listed and which jobs are surprisingly included. Write down your responses below. Be sure to include your reasons for your responses.

(a) Jobs convincingly listed as vulnerable to AI

I think TV announcers **will be replaced by** AI because in many TV news programs, automated narration has already been adopted and there's no difference with those delivered by human announcers. I also expect that taxi drivers **will be vulnerable to** AI because driverless taxis are already in use in some counties, including in the United States, and it does not seem they have a promising future.

(b) Jobs *surprisingly* listed as **vulnerable to AI**

I was surprised to learn that **journalists might be vulnerable to AI** because their job includes getting information by interviewing people on sites, summarizing the information, and reporting it to readers and viewers. I understand that disseminating could be taken over by AI, but I don't see how interviewing people **could be replaced by AI**. I don't understand either why counselors should **be vulnerable to AI** because their jobs are to interpret peoples' feelings, especially worries, anxieties, and stress, and help relax them by interacting with them. I know that AI like ChatGPT is sophisticated enough to interact with humans, but I don't think many people really want to interact with AI if they can help it.

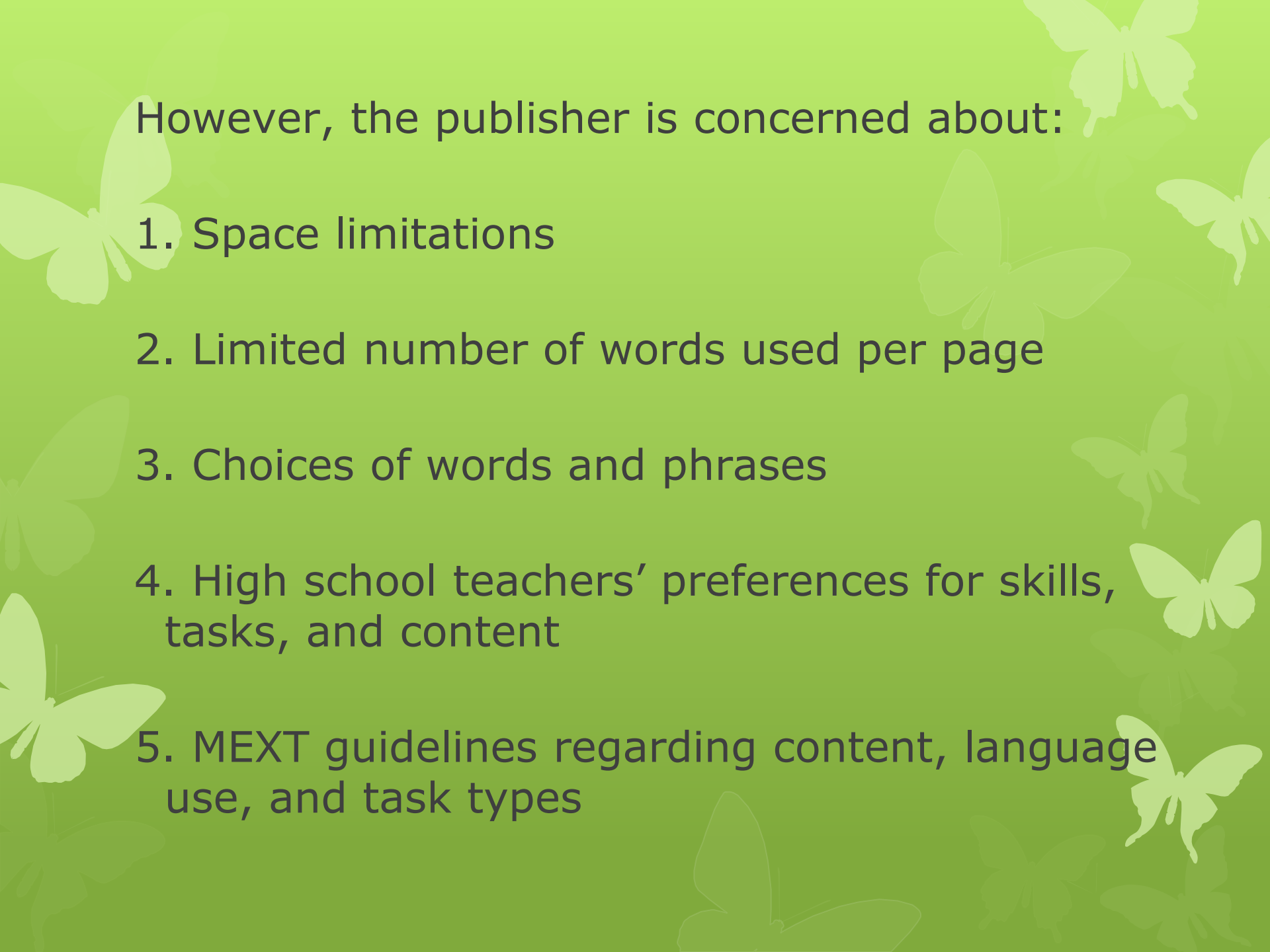
The background of the slide is a solid light green color. It is decorated with several stylized butterfly silhouettes in a pale yellow color. The butterflies are scattered across the slide, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others, creating a decorative and thematic border around the central text.

In sum, this task, i.e., real-life content and pair discussions, was developed to cater to **upper-intermediate and pre-advanced level English majors who demonstrate high motivation for English learning and use and high degrees of willingness to communicate**. Students report that this task suits and satisfies their interests, needs, and expectations. **Given appropriate adaptations to various language levels and topics and effective scaffolding, these tasks can also be effectively adopted with non-English majors with lower English proficiency levels, especially as they include speaking skills, one of the strongest motivational factors for Japanese learners of English.**

2. Humanistic coursebook writing

Mainstream English Expressions and Logic 3
(Zoshindo, 2025)

All the authors made every effort to make all the tasks in the coursebook as humanistic as possible despite inherent MEXT textbook constraints.



However, the publisher is concerned about:

1. Space limitations

2. Limited number of words used per page

3. Choices of words and phrases

4. High school teachers' preferences for skills, tasks, and content

5. MEXT guidelines regarding content, language use, and task types



What Would You Say to Newcomers?



Check!

- ☐ Look back on your high school life and discuss suggestions to newcomers.
- ☐ Make posters with messages or suggestions to welcome newcomers.



Introduction

Every spring, new students enter senior high school with mixed feelings of high expectations and anxieties about their new school life, in particular regarding their prospective studies, classmates, club activities, and school events.

Chances are you had similar experiences during the first two years after you entered high school. Therefore, heart-warming messages or suggestions from you as a *senpai* (older student) will unfailingly make newcomers feel positive about their new school life. Let's think about posters that reassure them about the bright future that awaits them over the coming two years.

EXPRESSIONS

prospective(予期される)

chances are ~

(おそらく~だ)

unfailingly(確実に)

reassure + 名

(名を安心させる)



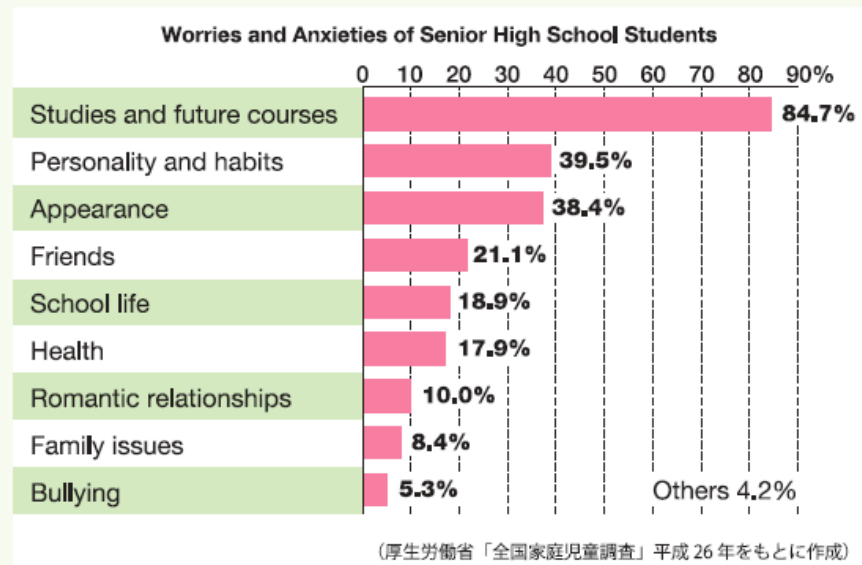
Reference

Read the following references. Think about messages and suggestions you might give to newcomers.

1 What Are the Common Worries and Anxieties of Senior High School Students?

According to the Nationwide Survey on Families and Children conducted in 2014, it was shown that 62.3% of senior high school students experience worries or anxieties of some sort. A breakdown of the worries and anxieties that these students have is shown in the graph on the right.

Look at the graph and discuss how you have been dealing with any of the listed worries or anxieties you may have experienced. In addition, brainstorm what tips you can offer to help newcomers cope with them effectively.



breakdown(<グラフなどの>内訳)

Reference



2 Messages and Suggestions from Senior High School Students: Survey Results

Human Relationships

- (a) Enjoy interaction with your friends and teachers; it will provide you with untold valuable contributions to your life.
- (b) Smile, and the world will smile with you; this is how you'll expand your network of friends.
- (c) When you are faced with life's challenges, don't worry about them alone; ask your friends and teachers for help.
- (d) Find a boyfriend or a girlfriend and have a great time with him or her; such a meaningful relationship will help enrich your life.

Studies

- (a) There will be things that won't be to your liking at first, but try to work on them; that way, you'll discover potential abilities you are not aware of.
- (b) Study English: high English proficiency will be a great advantage in your high school studies and future career.
- (c) Form good study habits and study autonomously every day; otherwise, you will not feel like studying or study effectively later in your second and third years.
- (d) Contact socially successful people and learn wisdom from them; reading books also helps a lot.

Activities and Events

- (a) Studying is important, but at the same time, enjoy your club activities and school events to the fullest.
- (b) Get fully involved in school events and club activities; they will be memorable experiences and make you confident about your future endeavors.
- (c) Be confident about doing whatever you do; if you can't, say to yourself: "If I can't do it, who can?"
- (d) Remember we are always on your side and ready to help you.



untold (計り知れない) to 名's liking (名の好みに合った) proficiency (能力)
autonomously (自主的に) endeavor (努力)



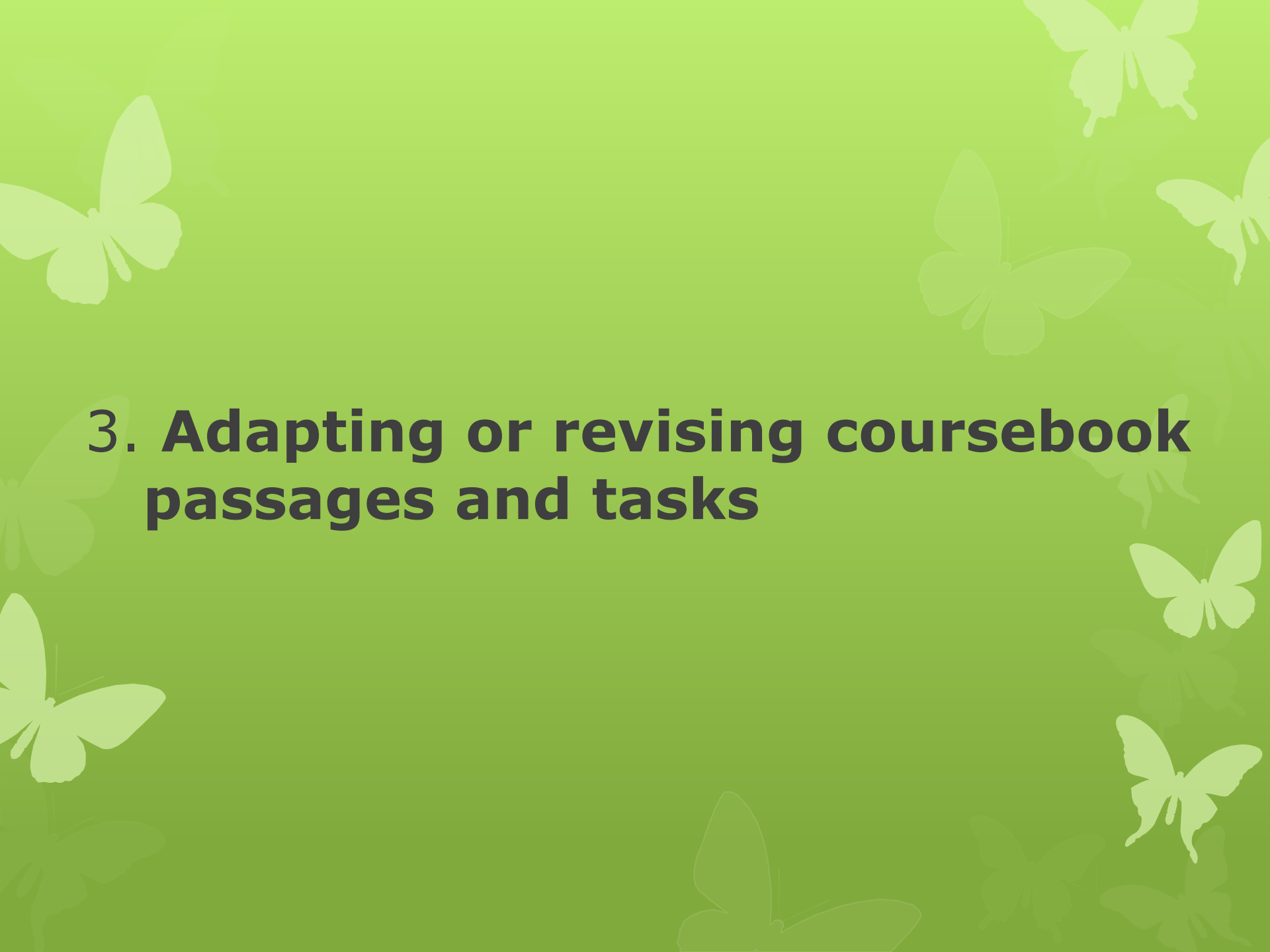
First, think about meaningful messages or suggestions from older students or teachers that helped you enjoy school life. Then, think about stories you have read or TV dramas you have watched. Did you come across any appealing messages or suggestions that might be useful for high school newcomers?



Steps in Making a Poster

FOR MORE USE P.82

1	Working in groups, look back on your senior high school life, and discuss what you wish you had done or what you feel good about having done.
2	Think about what you want to tell newcomers according to the categories in ❶ and ❷. Then, write those ideas down on the board.
3	Rank them in order of importance for newcomers for each of the topics.
4	Choose the most important ones and write short, friendly, witty messages or suggestions that will warm newcomers' hearts.
5	Think about the layout of your group's poster. Add illustrations and anecdotes that support the poster's message and bring it home to newcomers. *anecdote (体験談) bring + 名 ₁ + home to + 名 ₂ (名 ₁ を名 ₂ にしみじみ訴える)
6	Place copies of the posters around the school building, especially in newcomers' classrooms and on bulletin boards.



3. Adapting or revising coursebook passages and tasks

Original Text

Unit 6: Effective Language Learning

Writing Challenge

Persuasive Paragraph: Tips for effective studying

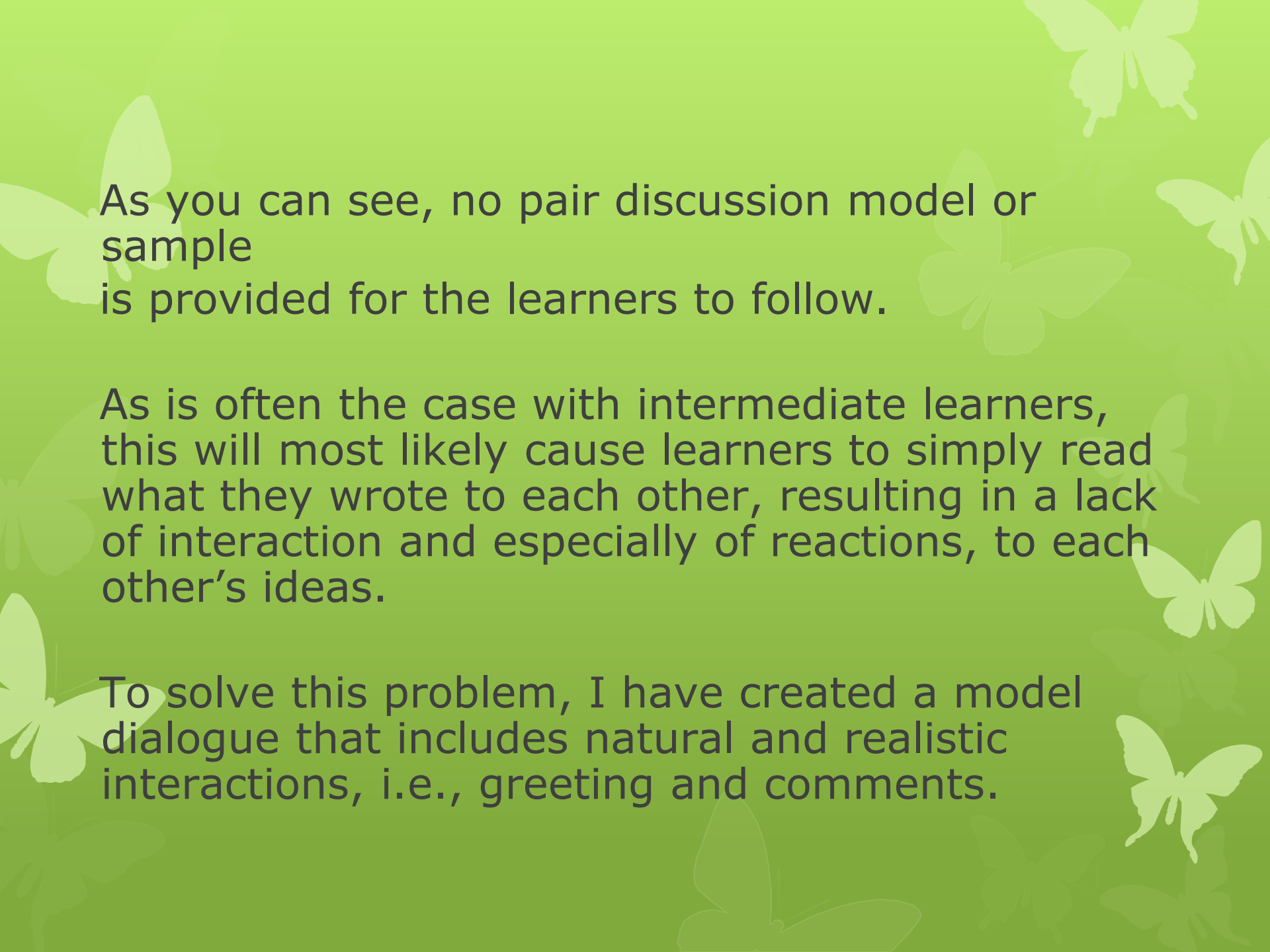
What strategies could make your daily language study more effective? Write a paragraph describing the habits or methods that help you to improve your language skills. Be sure to include transitions that fit the type of paragraph you're writing.

Example

(Topic Sentence) In order to improve my English skills, I need to ...
(Supporting Sentences) – Give examples of how you can improve your skills) First,... Second,... Finally,... (Concluding sentence)
Therefore,...

Pair discussion

Based on your writing, make pairs and talk about your ideas to each other.



As you can see, no pair discussion model or sample is provided for the learners to follow.

As is often the case with intermediate learners, this will most likely cause learners to simply read what they wrote to each other, resulting in a lack of interaction and especially of reactions, to each other's ideas.

To solve this problem, I have created a model dialogue that includes natural and realistic interactions, i.e., greeting and comments.

Pair Discussion

Directions:

1. First, take five minutes to write down three learning techniques you could adopt to improve your English skills
2. Form pairs and take turns to talk about your ideas
3. **Be sure to interact with each other, for example, by eliciting your partner's ideas and making positive comments on them and taking turns to report your ideas instead of one person talking about several ideas in one go.**

The following is an example of how the pair discussion can proceed interactively.

Sample Dialogue

A: **Hi. How's it going?**

B: **Hi. Not bad. How about you?**

A: **Pretty good. Shall we talk about what we can do to improve our English skills?**

B: **Sure. Why not?**

A: **Great. Could you share some of the techniques you use?**

B: **Of course.** One technique I use is I've been using this technique for a long time.

A: **That sounds very effective. / That's interesting! I've never tried that approach.**

B: **Thanks!**

A: **Now let me share one of my strategies for improving my English.**

B: Great! I'd like to hear about it.

A: I usually....

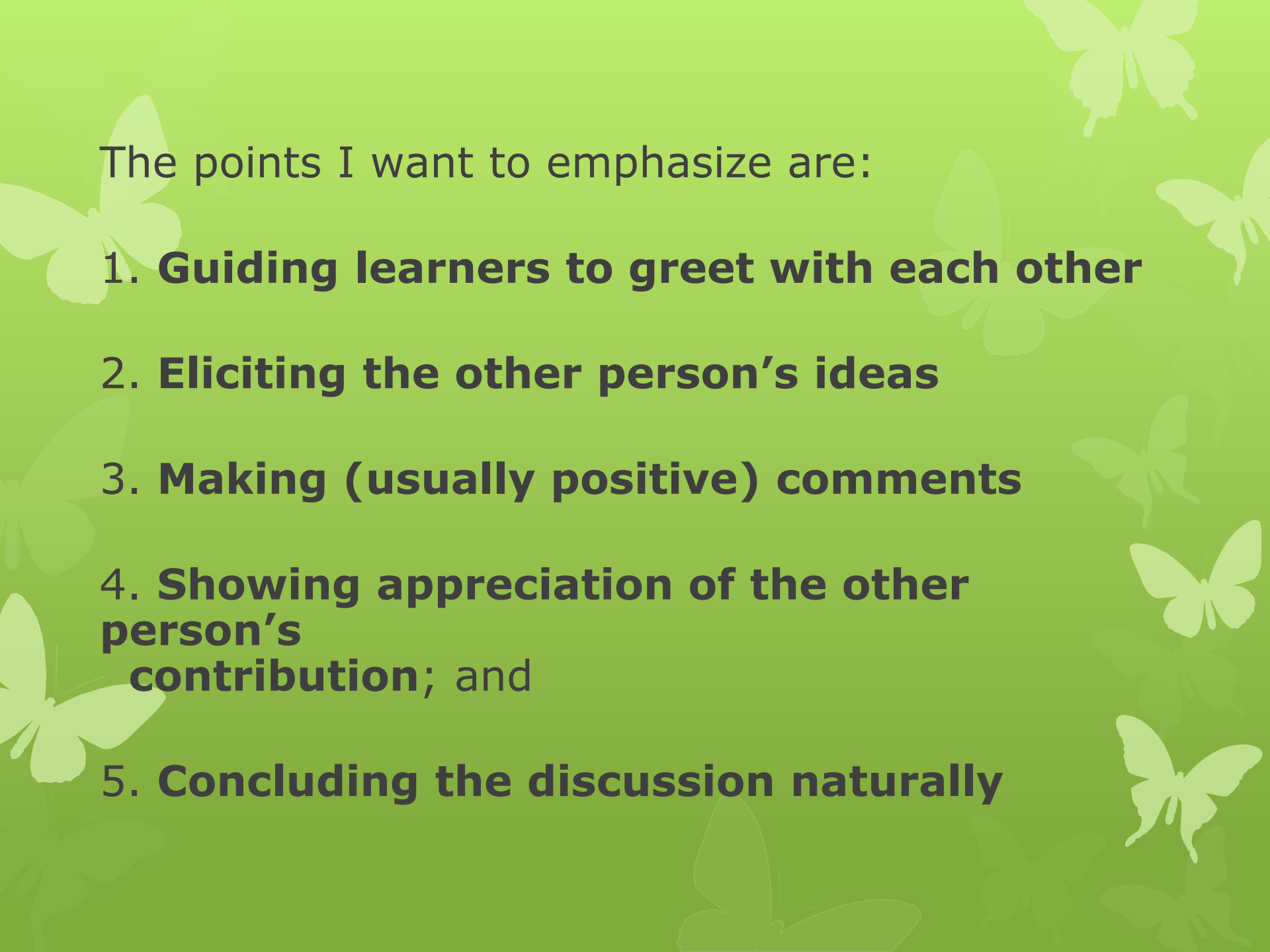
B: **That's interesting.** How did you start doing that?

A:

B: I see. That's something I might try myself.
....

A: **It seems we've had a very meaningful discussion today. Thank you for sharing your ideas. I learned a lot from you.**

B: **Same here. I enjoyed talking with you.**



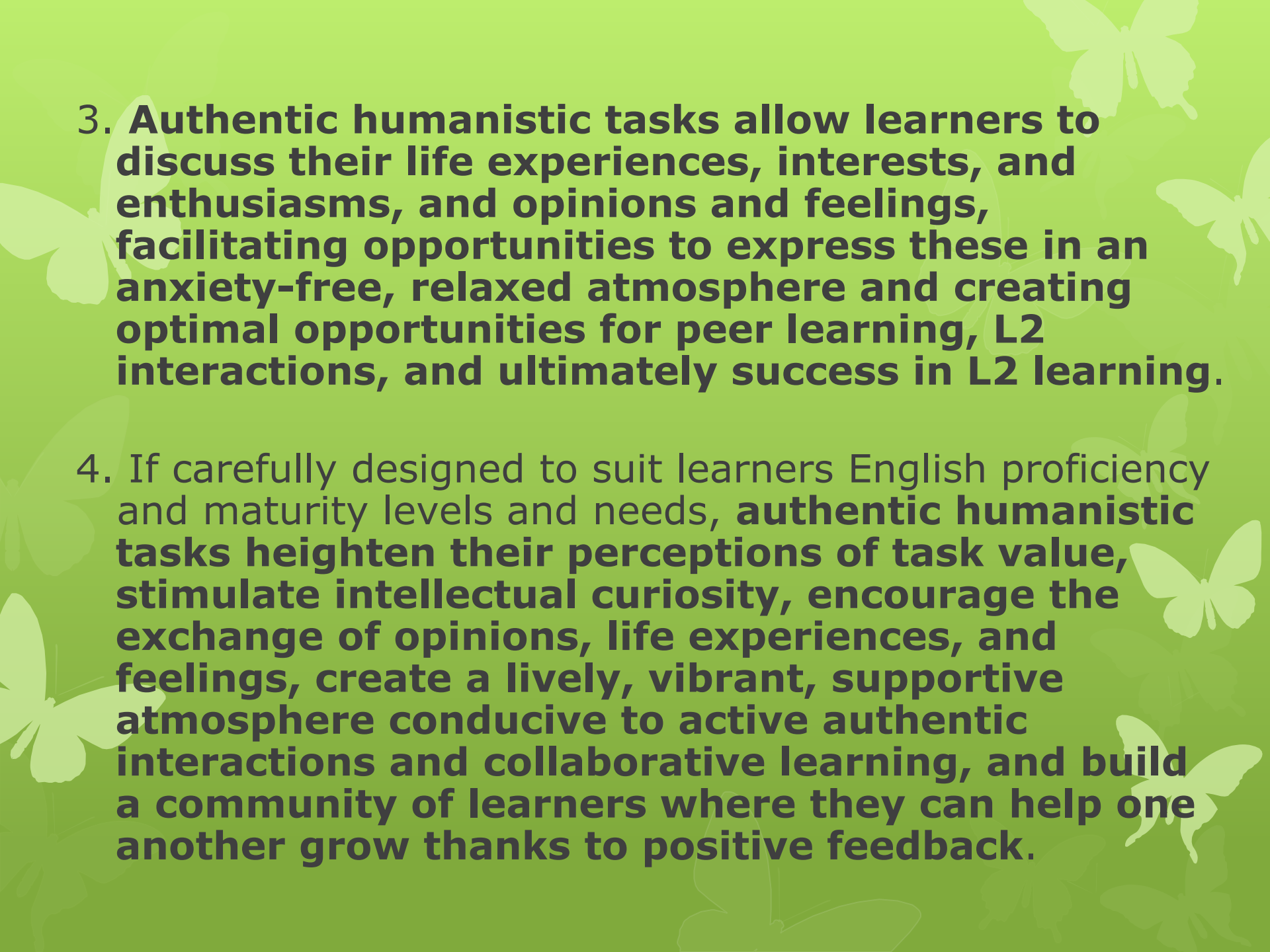
The points I want to emphasize are:

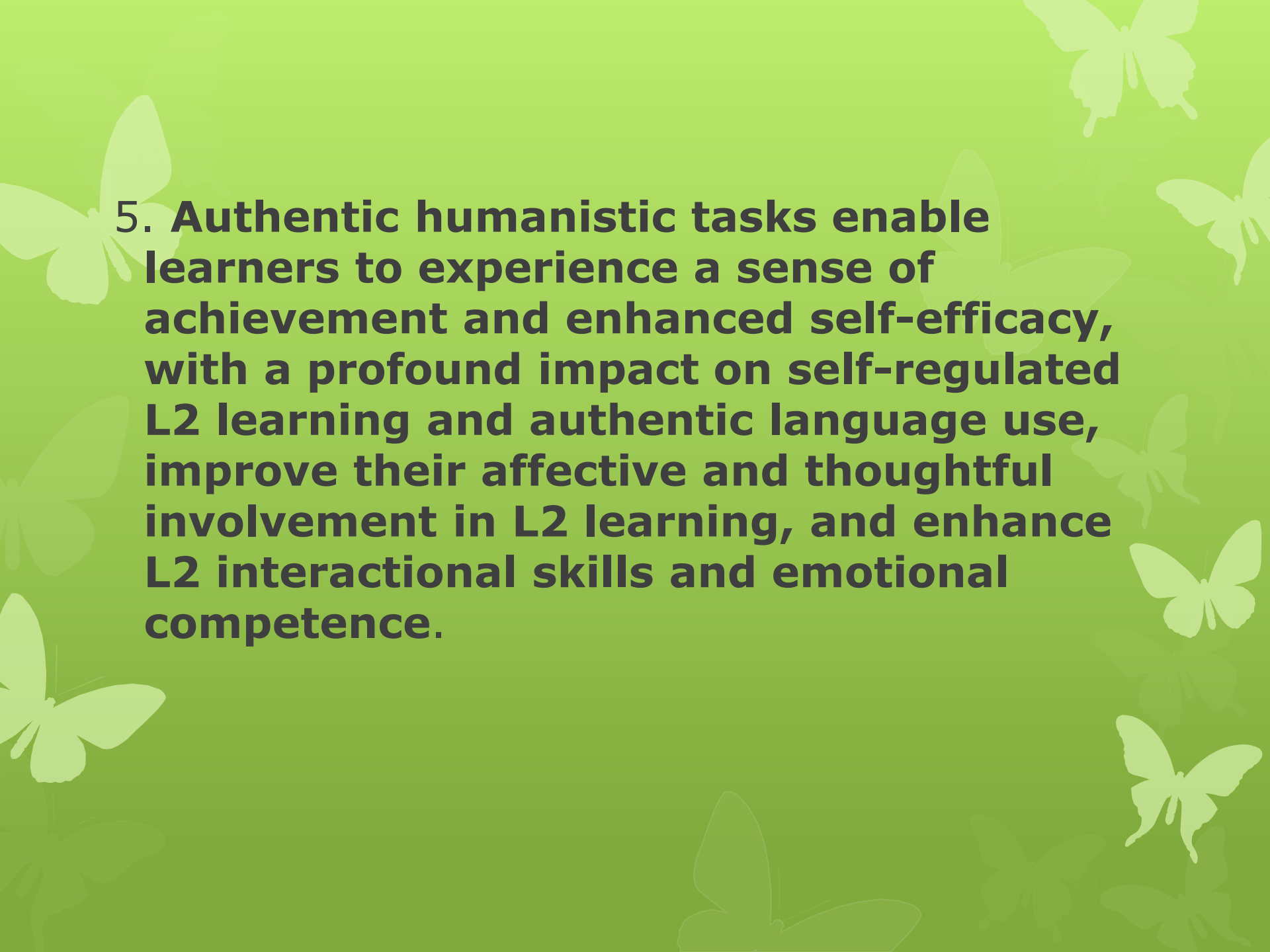
- 1. Guiding learners to greet with each other**
- 2. Eliciting the other person's ideas**
- 3. Making (usually positive) comments**
- 4. Showing appreciation of the other person's contribution; and**
- 5. Concluding the discussion naturally**

8. Conclusion

This presentation discussed only a portion of the humanistic tasks I have created to engage English majors in intellectual and affective involvement in L2 learning and use and generate authentic interactions. **Over time, I have received highly positive student evaluations of these activities.** Student-reported benefits of the tasks can be summarized as follows:

1. Provided they suit their interests and academic needs, **authentic humanistic tasks appeal to learners' intellect and affect, assist them in deeply processing information and relevant language, and improve English interactional skills.**
2. **Authentic humanistic tasks cater to learners' intrinsic interests, heighten their willingness to communicate, and instigate and sustain autonomous learning, generating opportunities to interact with each other using authentic language and enhancing English interactional skills.**

- 
3. **Authentic humanistic tasks allow learners to discuss their life experiences, interests, and enthusiasms, and opinions and feelings, facilitating opportunities to express these in an anxiety-free, relaxed atmosphere and creating optimal opportunities for peer learning, L2 interactions, and ultimately success in L2 learning.**
4. If carefully designed to suit learners English proficiency and maturity levels and needs, **authentic humanistic tasks heighten their perceptions of task value, stimulate intellectual curiosity, encourage the exchange of opinions, life experiences, and feelings, create a lively, vibrant, supportive atmosphere conducive to active authentic interactions and collaborative learning, and build a community of learners where they can help one another grow thanks to positive feedback.**



5. Authentic humanistic tasks enable learners to experience a sense of achievement and enhanced self-efficacy, with a profound impact on self-regulated L2 learning and authentic language use, improve their affective and thoughtful involvement in L2 learning, and enhance L2 interactional skills and emotional competence.

9. Final Word

Thank you very much for your kind attention and for your interest in my pedagogical interventions and teaching ideas.

If you have any questions or comments, please send them to Sakae Onoda at s-onoda@juntendo.ac.jp by email.

All suggestions are highly appreciated.

Sakae Onoda

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