

## What is Tandem Learning?

Tandem learning is a cooperative learning partnership between two people with different native mother tongues. They help each other improve their language skills in each other's respective native language. The participants meet regularly either face-to-face or communicate via email, or via chat, messenger or Skype.

### Some points to help you make effective use of cooperative tandem-learning:

- Find a time which fits both of you and make this a regular meeting. Meeting once a week for 90 minutes is perfect to begin with. Both languages should be practiced separately and not mixed in the same meeting.
- Keep a copy book where you write down all new words, phrases and grammar structures during the meeting.
- When learning in TANDEM, you are in turn teacher / expert of your own mother tongue and student of the foreign language. When you are in teacher role, it is extremely important to adapt your language to the level of the learner. While speaking to a beginner student, you must speak slowly, pronounce words clearly and use short sentences with basic vocabulary. This is a switch you have to make when you teach your mother tongue language, helping the learner to slowly get used to your authentic way of speech.
- Decide a topic ahead of time for each meeting. Try to think of something – but not everything has to be prepared in advance for the session. Likewise, after each meeting you should summarize words, phrases and sentences which are important and useful for you. It would be perfect to write a short text using all this new material bringing it into context. Begin the next session reading your text to the 'teacher'.
- Correcting mistakes can be done in different ways. You can interrupt your partner right away and point out the mistake and give the correct form. Alternatively, you can write down the mistakes while your partner is speaking and only at the end speak about the mistakes and correct them. In the long run, this might be more advisable as it can be very demotivating

stopping the flow of speech because of any small mistake. In any case, you should decide together in which way and to what degree correction should happen.

- If you learn a new word and write it down, always write it within a context - write a sentence or two to give a frame to this word or phrase. Later on, you can add to this new phrase, words and sentences which you already know. In this way, you always connect new elements with known words and phrases and you enlarge your knowledge in the foreign language effectively.
- Improving your pronunciation: The mother tongue speaker will write down the words which repeatedly cause problems to the learner of the new language. As the expert of the language, he or she will then pronounce the words slowly and the student will repeat them.
- Nobody is perfect, be brave to make mistakes. The more you will feel free to use the foreign language, the faster and better you will learn!