Guidelines and Journal

for the Tandem Programme of the Language Centre at Helmut Schmidt University

HSU Tandem Guidelines

Opportunities and advantages of the Tandem Programme

- Immersive experience: tandem language lessons allow you to immerse yourself in the target language and practice speaking with a native speaker.

- Cultural exchange: learning a language in the tandem programme offers the opportunity for cultural exchange and allows you to get to know another culture and improve your intercultural communication skills.

- Increased motivation: a language partner who also learns from you can increase your motivation and therefore help you to pursue your learning goals.

- Improved accuracy: practising with a native speaker can help you identify and correct pronunciation and grammatical errors.

- Using the language in real life: learning in tandem provides the opportunity to use the language in real-life situations, which is crucial for improving fluency and confidence.

- Personal connection: learning a tandem language can also lead to you building a personal relationship with your language partner, which can be a fun, interesting and long-lasting experience.

Altogether, learning in tandem offers many advantages and can be a valuable tool for improving language skills and achieving language learning goals.

A few ground rules

In tandem learning, coordinated learning as partners is paramount. Both tandem partners are responsible for their own learning goals and content. In order to create good, basic conditions for cooperative learning, a few basic rules should be observed:

- The tandem partners meet regularly, e.g. weekly (at least 6 meetings within 8 weeks).
- The two languages are spoken separately. 45 minutes each, with no switching back and forth.
- No "teaching". This means that the foreign language speaker decides on the content (thus, topics and questions are prepared beforehand).
- Patience and understanding are required: the partner should not be interrupted, they are merely assisted. Even if it seems to be going nowhere, you should try to paraphrase, describe or even draw what you want to say.
- Prepare and follow up content: incorporate authentic, ‘real-life’ materials such as newspapers, TV shows, films or books into your language exercises.
- Give constructive feedback: encourage each other and make suggestions for improvement. Keep an open mind.. Accept cultural differences and be willing to learn from each other.
- Keep a tandem journal (see below) to keep track of your progress and goals and to receive a certificate of participation. Keeping a journal is an optional part of participation in our programme.

The Journal

The programme is most successful when the tandem sessions are prepared and followed up in detail. For this purpose, we have prepared the tandem journal to help you formulate learning objectives for each session, identify ways of working and types of learning, and record progress. If you keep the journal diligently (at least 200 words per page) and hand it in at the end of the programme, you will also have the opportunity to receive a certificate of attendance. For examples and instructions on how to keep the journal, please see our "example journal" below.

Example Journal

Overview of Sessions

	Date	Time spent on each language	Topics
1. Session			
2. Session			
3. Session			
4. Session			
5. Session			
6. Session			

Example Journal

Tandem Session No. _____
Preparation

Below you will find space for handwritten notes in preparation for your tandem session. These may include:

- Learning objectives for this meeting, for example:
    - What do I want to be able to ask or express?
    - What vocabulary (topics) do I want to learn and/or practice in this meeting?
    - What aspects of learning do I want to focus on today (vocabulary training, idioms, tenses, quality of language, pronunciation ...)?
- What topic do I want to talk about today and in what form?
    - Information on this topic (use of articles, websites, copies/printouts ...)
    - My opinion on this topic
    - Prepare questions on this topic for my tandem partner (ask for opinion, etc.)
    - Preparation of vocabulary (notes on unknown words, expressions and also grammar to talk about the topic).
- Where could the topic lead, which areas (in terms of language and topic) are linked to my chosen topic?

Set specific, realistic and verifiable goals for your meetings.

Example Journal

Tandem Session No. _____
During the session

Below you will find space for handwritten notes during your tandem session. These may include:

- New words, expressions, or idioms and their use (situational, etc.)
- Feedback from my tandem partner:
    - How were my prepared questions/statements understood?
    - Was I able to make myself understood in terms of language/grammar?
    - Where and when did my partner correct me and can I implement the feedback?
- Tips from my partner
- What could I learn about my tandem partner's target language and culture?
- What do I need to follow up on?
    - Unknown expressions that could not be clarified during the session.
    - Grammar units that I should repeat

Example Journal

Tandem Session No. _____
Follow-up

Below you will find space for handwritten notes to follow up your tandem session. These may include:

- How well was I prepared? What could/should I do differently next time in terms of preparation?
- Summary/reflection of the meeting.
    - What have I learned (reference to the formulated learning objectives)?
    - Can I apply what I have learned?
    - What do I need to improve?
    - In which areas do I have language difficulties, e.g. grammar?
    - Was I able to incorporate my partner's feedback?
- What was particularly positive and what did not go so well (and how could this be changed)?
- What should my tandem partner pay more attention to next time?
- How can I advise my tandem partner for the next meeting?

Journal

Tandem Programme

Names of participants	
Languages	

Journal

Overview of Sessions

	Date	Time spent on each language	Topics
1. Session			
2. Session			
3. Session			
4. Session			
5. Session			
6. Session			

Journal Meeting No. 1

Preparation

Below you will find space for handwritten notes in preparation for your tandem session. These may include.

Journal Meeting No. 1

During the session

Below you will find space for handwritten notes during your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 1

Follow-up

Below you will find space for handwritten notes to follow up your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 2

Preparation

Below you will find space for handwritten notes in preparation for your tandem session. These may include.

Journal Meeting No. 2

During the session

Below you will find space for handwritten notes during your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 2

Follow-up

Below you will find space for handwritten notes to follow up your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 3

Preparation

Below you will find space for handwritten notes in preparation for your tandem session. These may include.

Journal Meeting No. 3

During the session

Below you will find space for handwritten notes during your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 3

Follow-up

Below you will find space for handwritten notes to follow up your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 4

Preparation

Below you will find space for handwritten notes in preparation for your tandem session. These may include.

Journal Meeting No. 4

During the session

Below you will find space for handwritten notes during your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 4

Follow-up

Below you will find space for handwritten notes to follow up your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 5

Preparation

Below you will find space for handwritten notes in preparation for your tandem session. These may include.

Journal Meeting No. 5

During the session

Below you will find space for handwritten notes during your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 5

Follow-up

Below you will find space for handwritten notes to follow up your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 6

Preparation

Below you will find space for handwritten notes in preparation for your tandem session. These may include.

Journal Meeting No. 6

During the session

Below you will find space for handwritten notes during your tandem session.

Journal Meeting No. 6

Follow-up

Below you will find space for handwritten notes to follow up your tandem session.